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BRUCE POWER REFURBISHMENTS WOULD INJECT BILLIONS INTO ONTARIO'S ECONOMY

An estimated 15,000 jobs will be supported annually during revitalization program

Recently, the Ontario government pledged its support for the refurbishment of Ontario's nuclear reactors, including those at Bruce Power, which is located near Kincardine, ON, on Lake Huron's shore.

While there has been a lot of focus on the construction of new reactors, the province made a sound policy decision to focus on renewing much of our existing nuclear fleet, which, between Bruce Power and Darlington, will meet nearly half of Ontario's future energy needs.

This planned, multi-billion dollar investment program at Bruce Power will inject an estimated $3 billion into Ontario's economy and support 15,000 jobs annually, says a study from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. Refurbishing the remaining six of eight Bruce Power nuclear reactors will provide years of secure jobs for the skilled tradespeople of the province, while continuing to benefit the over-1,200 small businesses in Ontario which currently partner with the world's largest operating nuclear facility and employ thousands.

Bruce Power, which is privately-owned by two Canadian companies, as well as the 500,000-member OMERS pension plan, has a unique public-private partnership where it invests private money into reactors that are still owned by the province. That means no public money is invested at Bruce Power – a win-win for Ontario taxpayers who benefit from owning refurbished assets while having continuous access to safe, reliable and low-cost nuclear energy for decades to come.

Although often misunderstood due to the large up-front capital requirements, nuclear is actually one of the lowest-cost forms of energy. Due to the large, reliable volume of low-cost power provided by nuclear, the average cost, including all liabilities, sits between 5 and 6 cents per kilowatt/hour. Nuclear provides over half of Ontario's power and yet has one of the lowest impacts on your energy bill.

Nuclear is also one of the cleanest forms of energy, creating none of the carbon emissions that lead to air pollution and negatively impact the health of Ontarians. In fact, the rejuvenation of four Bruce Power units over the past decade has provided 70 per cent of the energy needed for the province to shut down all its coal plants, which it's on track to do in 2014.

By refurbishing Bruce Power's reactors, the province will ensure these coal plants stay closed.

Nuclear energy is the most reliable form of electricity in Ontario. The government's decision to move ahead with refurbishment of the Bruce Power facility will inject billions in Ontario's economy, secure well-paid, stable jobs for generations of workers, and provide safe, reliable, carbon-free and low-cost energy to the people of Ontario.

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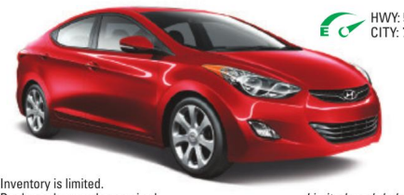

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SENATE RIVALS WHIPPED UP A WITCH HUNT AGAINST ME, SAYS WALLIN

HER SIDE OF THE SCANDAL PAGE 11

Being a celeb mom is a lot of Work, B**ch

Britney Spears says she has a lot on her plate, performing around the word while still mothering two sons PAGE 31

We want sandy beaches, not smoky ones

Council urged to pass bylaw banning smoking within nine metres of sports fields, beaches and parks PAGE 3

Raptors run rings around Grizzlies

Toronto tears up the court 108-72 to remain at only one loss in dwindling pre-season PAGE 57

Cops spied on the alleged crack-video meet with Gawker

Expected gun deal. Documents suggest six cops watched huge political scandal unfold

Six officers from Toronto's organized-crime unit were watching suspected drug and gun dealer Mohamed Siad.

It was May 14, and the cops had learned Siad was to be involved in a possible firearms deal. They'd covertly followed him from his apartment and planned to wait for a transaction, then arrest everyone involved, according to a police surveillance report.

The arrests didn't happen.

Siad, later revealed as the person professing to have a video showing Mayor Rob Ford smoking crack cocaine, was involved in a different type of transaction: the sale of "a cellular phone, not a gun," the report says.

As it turns out, Siad's meeting with that "unknown party" was the same day, place and time that John Cook, the editor of U.S.-based website Gawker, met with two men trying to sell the alleged video.

Cook has seen a picture of Siad and believes it was he who played him the video.

Two days later, Cook published his account of that meeting, claiming he saw a well-lit, clear 90-second cellphone video of the mayor smoking what appears to be crack cocaine and uttering homophobic and racist remarks. A few hours after that, Torstar News Service revealed that two of its reporters had seen the same video weeks earlier.

Players' perspective

Mohamed Siad recently turned down a request by a Torstar News Service reporter for a visit at Maplehurst Correctional Complex, where he is being held while facing a slew of charges.

- As for Gawker's John Cook, who was almost caught up in a Canadian police sting: "I am pleased to know the watchful eye of the Toronto police department was looking out for me," he said.

The meeting took place at the Dixon Road highrises that became the epicentre of Project Traveller guns and gang raids.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A BLUE-BLOOD BAPTISM

Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, carries her son Prince George after his christening at the Chapel Royal in St James' Palace on Wednesday in London. **See story, page 17.** JOHN STILLWELL/GETTY IMAGES

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Woodbine/Mohawk

Race track group sheds not-for-profit status

Canada's largest not-for-profit horse racing operation has quietly turned the private track into a for-profit business.

Woodbine Entertainment Group, which operates Woodbine and Mohawk race tracks, made the change in April soon after a long-running deal that funded Ontario horse racing tracks with slot machine profits officially ended in March.

As part of a new funding plan, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. pays rental fees to racetracks (instead of dispersing a percentage of slots profits to host tracks) for housing slot machines. There are about 3,000 slot machines on the Woodbine premises.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Land deal controversy

Former Oshawa manager sues city for $1 million

A former Oshawa manager is suing the city for more than $1 million after confidential information about his firing in May was allegedly leaked and became the subject of online chatter speculating his dismissal was linked to a controversial land deal.

Christopher Harper, the city's real estate manager for more than two years, filed a statement of claim in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice earlier this month alleging breach of contract, negligence and breach of confidentiality.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Red tape snags pumpkin parades

The Pumpkin Parade event in Roncesvalles has become a neighbourhood tradition. But the city says it will no longer collect the jack-o'-lanterns residents leave in Sorauren Park the night after Halloween. Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff is telling groups they must be registered, non-profit organizations or they will have to pay a permit fee. The city's attempt to make it easier for community groups to stage increasingly popular pumpkin parades in Toronto parks has hit some snags, but staff is promising to do things differently next year. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Smoking ban looms for parks, beaches

City committee.
Council urged to pass bylaw banning smoking within nine metres of park amenities

A proposed ban on smoking near Toronto sports fields, swimming beaches and other parks amenities was unanimously endorsed Wednesday by the parks and environment committee.

If passed by city council next month, smokers could be fined $300 for lighting up within nine metres of a sports field, beach or parks amenity such as a skateboard park, ski hill, outdoor swimming pool or Toronto Island Ferry dock.

City council at its Nov. 13 meeting will also decide whether to ban smoking within nine metres of public building entrances and in public squares, as recommended by the board of health.

Asked Wednesday how they intended to enforce additional restrictions in the parks, city staff said they expect to see high voluntary compliance.

"You'll find that, generally speaking, 97 per cent of the population will abide by any bylaw without any kind of enforcement whatsoever," said Jim Hart, general manager of parks, forestry and recreation.

"This isn't something where they're going to be going around parks in the city writing tickets," Hart told the committee.

Coun. Mary Margaret McMahon called the restrictions a "no-brainer healthwise" and she hopes it motivates smokers who can't or don't want to quit to be more careful with their cigarette butts.

McMahon, who represents Ward 32 (Beaches-East York), which includes waterfront beaches, said cigarette butts are a major source of beach litter.

The restrictions, if enacted, will let Toronto catch up to other large cities across North America that have a range of restrictions on outdoor smoking, said Dr. David McKeown, the city's medical officer of health. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Quoted

"I don't know what the mindset is of someone who just tosses a cigarette butt and thinks that's not litter. That same person would never throw a pop can or a bag of chips or a garbage bag on the ground."

Coun. Mary Margaret McMahon

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Once more round the catwalk

Models decked out in the Matthew Gallagher Spring/Summer 2014 collection flood the catwalk during World MasterCard Toronto Fashion Week on Wednesday. Fashion week continues until Friday. KEITH BEATY/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Pricey fundraiser preceded decision to axe reactors

Liberals. $15B nuclear project would have been run by Ontario Power Generation, a competitor to dinner host Bruce Power

The head of privately owned Bruce Power hosted an exclusive $100,000 fundraiser for the Liberals shortly before Premier Kathleen Wynne shelved publicly owned rival Ontario Power Generation's new nuclear reactors, the Torstar News Service has learned.

On Sept. 10, Bruce Power president and CEO Duncan Hawthorne held the cosy dinner for about a dozen high rollers at the posh Four Seasons Hotel on Yorkville Avenue in Toronto.

Wynne was the guest of honour and Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli was also on hand to hobnob with movers and shakers in the electricity sector.

The event was organized as the Ontario government was finalizing its Oct. 10 decision not to proceed with the $15-billion construction of two new nuclear reactors at Darlington, which would have been operated by OPG.

It also comes at a time when there has been a push in some quarters for Bruce Power to run OPG's existing Darlington nuclear station and oversee the planned refurbishment of reactors there and at Kincardine.

Chiarelli said the fundraiser had no bearing on the Liberal government's energy policy-making.

"It had nothing to do with the cabinet decision to not proceed with new nuclear at this time," the minister said in an interview this week.

In an email, Bruce Power's John Peevers would neither confirm nor deny the company had conducted the fundraiser for the governing party.

"Bruce Power has a policy of donating to all major political parties including the NDP, PCs and Liberals," wrote Peevers.

"This is done in compliance with Elections Ontario rules that provide transparency regarding all donations made."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Pays to be private?

The fundraiser highlights a potential lobbying advantage that Bruce Power has over OPG. As a Crown corporation, the provincial utility is not allowed to host political fundraisers or spend for electoral purposes.

Free migrants from prolonged detention, Ottawa urged

Macdonald Scott, immigration counsel for Michael Mvogo, mails an official complaint to the UN high commissioner for human rights in Toronto on Wednesday. ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Seven years after his arrest at a Toronto homeless shelter, a man who has been slated for deportation has remained in jail in Canada because he has nowhere to go.

Arriving here in 2005 on a fraudulent American passport, Michael Mvogo's story represents the dilemma faced by both Canadian officials and many immigration detainees who do not see their release coming anytime soon.

On Wednesday, the End Immigration Detention Network, a community umbrella group, filed a complaint to the United Nations on behalf of Mvogo — and hundreds of detainees like him held for immigration violations — for their release and to compel Ottawa to limit immigration detention to 90 days.

"Canadians need to be concerned that we are holding hundreds of people at a cost of $239 a day for the purposes of removal when they clearly cannot be removed," Macdonald Scott, one of two legal counsels for Mvogo, told reporters at a rally in front of the Federal Court on Queen Street.

"It is a waste of taxpayers' money and it's a breaking of their rights."

Syed Hussan of No One Is Illegal, a member of the End Immigration Detention Network, said detainees are stuck in immigration hold because they are refused travel documents by their country of origin, deemed UN convention refugees despite their criminal convictions in Canada, or placed on a removal moratorium due to volatile conditions back home.

Canada should abide by the international law and limit immigration detention to 90 days, Hussan said.

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Regional transit agency

New prez for GO

Greg Percy
CONTRIBUTED

Metrolinx has promoted GO vice-president Greg Percy to head the regional transit agency when retiring president Gary McNeil leaves next month. The announcement comes following an international search by a consultant. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Online meeting

Man charged in sex assault of teen

A Saskatoon man has been arrested in connection with the alleged sexual assault of a 16-year-old girl in Toronto.

Police say the teen met and chatted with a man posing as a 22-year-old on a website called Whisper. It's alleged the man picked up the girl from school and drove her to a hotel where he sexually assaulted her. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Second World War relics

Senior brings old grenades, bombs to police

The military was called in after an elderly woman showed up at an Ontario police station to turn in grenades, a tank round and even aircraft bombs dating back to the Second World War. Police in St. Thomas, south of London, say the 94-year-old walked in carrying her late husband's collection. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Beef recall

T.O. firm denies it's source of E. coli

The CEO of a company at the centre of a ground-beef recall over possible E. coli contamination says the bacteria did not originate from his Toronto plant. Duffy Smith of Belmont Meats Ltd. says food-safety inspectors are checking where the beef trim came from that his company uses to make burgers to find the source of the contamination. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Train derailments 'cause for alarm': MP

Safety concerns. There have been nearly 300 derailments in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area in the past five years

Quoted

"The little stuff is always going to happen. There's always going to be a fender bender on the way home."

Canada Safety Council's Raynald Marchand

The Aldershot Via train derailment in Burlington on Feb. 26, 2012 was one of nearly 300 derailments in the GTA in the past five years. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Train derailments in the Greater Toronto Area are relatively common, highlighting the need for rail companies to alert cities to dangerous goods passing through, critics say.

Transportation Safety Board statistics show that there have been nearly 300 derailments in the GTA, including Hamilton, in the past five years. Of those derailments, 117 occurred in Toronto and 86 in York.

"It is a cause for alarm," said federal transportation critic Olivia Chow. "Given that more dangerous cargo is being shipped, be it propane or crude oil, even one derailment can cause death and destruction."

The vast majority were non-main-track derailments, which means they occurred on side tracks or rail yards. There have been 20 main-track derailments, which are more serious because they run through more heavily populated areas.

A Transportation Safety Board spokesperson said Toronto and York regions see more non-main-track derailments because that is where the main rail yards are and where switching occurs. "It is consistent with what we would expect to see," said Julie Leroux.

But in light of the recent derailment in Gainford, Alta., which forced nearly 100 people from their homes, and the Lac-Mégantic disaster in July, Chow said that railways must be required to alert cities to hazardous cargo.

"The irony of it is that when something goes wrong, it's up to the municipality to pick up the pieces," she said.

A spokesperson for Transport Canada said the government had increased rail safety by hiring more inspectors, increasing fines for companies that break regulations and requiring companies to submit environmental management plans. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

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Distracted drivers could face demerits

Ontario's governing Liberals plan to toughen penalties for motorists who are caught phoning or texting while driving, which could include demerit points.

"There will be action coming, whether it's regulations, whether it's legislation or some combination of education and new penalties — haven't decided," Transportation Minister Glen Murray said Wednesday.

"We're really in the middle of looking at what would be most effective."

Murray said he personally supports stiffer penalties for distracted drivers. There are concerns that the current fines aren't sufficient, given that there have been 235,000 charges laid in the last three years, he said.

"We're getting a lot of complaints," he said, adding that 20 per cent of all collisions result from distracted driving.

All provinces and territories, save Nunavut, ban drivers from using cellphones while driving, according to the Canadian Automobile Association. Fines start at $155 in Ontario, but there are no demerit points attached.

The government is also looking at penalties for "dooring" — when cyclists collide with a vehicle door that's suddenly opened, said spokesman Patrick Searle. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Young legislation

Four years ago, the Liberals banned drivers from using any hand-held electronic devices to text, email or talk while driving, except for 911 calls. Ontario's top court says it's illegal to even hold a phone while driving. GPS devices are allowed, as long as they're properly secured.

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NDP Leader Andrea Horwath says the Liberals haven't learned their lesson when it comes to cancelling power plants. BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NDP 'shocked' by power-plant uncertainty

Scandal No. 2? Liberals don't know final cost of upgrades, but claim taxpayers won't be on the hook for overruns

Ontario's Liberal government "learned nothing" from the $1.1-billion cost of killing two gas plants and is ready to refurbish nuclear reactors without knowing the final price, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath charged Wednesday.

The Liberals recently abandoned plans to build two new nuclear reactors, after spending $180 million in preparatory work, but said they would refurbish existing reactors at the Darlington power station to extend service life until 2055.

"The procurement for it is going to take place in stages, and the final cost is not known at this particular point in time," said Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli.

The NDP released a statement from the Ministry of Energy showing "a final timeline and cost will not be known until the regulatory and technical scope is determined" and contracts are signed, sometime in 2015.

"We were shocked when the minister responded to our request by saying, 'We're spending $950 million on contracts we've already signed but we can't tell you what the final cost is going to be,'" said Horwath. "That is frightening.

"They haven't learned their lesson when it comes to cancelling power plants, when it comes to planning for new nuclear and now this refurbishment plan, where apparently the sky is the limit when it comes to the price," she said.

Chiarelli said the province was looking to negotiate contracts, as it did for the refurbishment of reactors by Bruce Power, where the developer is on the hook for any cost overruns, not taxpayers or hydro ratepayers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jeffrey Baldwin death

No concerns about couple who starved boy: Case worker

A children's aid worker handling the case of a Toronto boy who died of starvation in his grandparents' care said there were no concerns about the couple that would have prompted her to search their records.

Margarita Quintana of the Catholic Children's Aid Society told the inquest into Jeffrey Baldwin's death Wednesday that grandmother Elva Bottineau seemed "highly concerned" about the well-being of her grandchildren.

"We didn't check records during that time unless we had protection concerns for the person," she said.

The inquest has heard that both Bottineau and her partner Norman Kidman had a history of child abuse, including separate convictions. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Moscow.
Greenpeace activists facing new charges

Russia's main investigative agency said Wednesday that it has dropped piracy charges against jailed Greenpeace activists, including two Canadians, and charged them instead with hooliganism.

The news brought little comfort to anxious family members back home, since the new charges still carry stiff prison sentences of up to seven years.

But Patti Ruzycki Stirling, whose brother Paul Ruzycki was serving as first mate aboard the Greenpeace ship Arctic Sunrise when it was seized last month, said the decision still represents progress from the Russian government.

Ruzycki, fellow Canadian Alexandre Paul and 28 other activists were originally facing prison terms of up to 15 years under the original piracy charges.

"It's the first step in the right direction, the fact that they've come to their senses and realized that piracy is lunacy, that they had no grounds for that," she said in a telephone interview from her home in Port Colborne, Ont.

Greenpeace took a harder line, saying their crew members were arrested while travelling in international waters and should not be behind bars at all.

Christy Ferguson, Arctic Campaign Co-ordinator with Greenpeace Canada, called the new charges "wildly disproportionate."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

German chancellor upset over possible phone spying

German Chancellor Angela Merkel poses with a cellphone at the booth of Sony Ericsson during her opening walk at the CeBIT in Hanover, northern Germany, in this March 4, 2008 file photo. Merkel complained to U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday after learning that U.S. intelligence may have targeted her mobile phone.

JOERG SARBACH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Saudi Arabia

Authorities warn women not to protest driving ban

The ministry in charge of Saudi Arabia's police is warning against "disturbing public order" days before activists are to call on women to drive cars in defiance of a ban on them getting behind the wheel. The Wednesday statement from Interior Ministry spokesman Turki al-Faisal appeared directed at this Saturday's campaign.

Women are not issued licences in the conservative kingdom. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Pamela Wallin shares her side of the expense-scandal story

Stating her case. Former Conservatives Mike Duffy and Patrick Brazeau also facing possibility of being kicked out of Senate

Sen. Pamela Wallin arrives at the Senate on Parliament Hill on Wednesday.
ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pamela Wallin says a government move to expel her from the Senate is an affront to Canadian democracy, motivated by politics and personal vendettas against her by confidantes of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The embattled senator — who has reimbursed almost $150,000 in travel-expense claims that the Senate has ruled invalid — told the chamber Wednesday that she was targeted unfairly by fellow Conservatives Marjory LeBreton and Carolyn Stewart Olsen.

LeBreton was government leader in the Senate until she stepped down this summer. Stewart Olsen is a former aide to Harper who, until this week, was a key member of the Senate committee that sat in judgment on Wallin and three other senators, ordering external audits of their expenses and ultimately asking the RCMP to investigate all four.

Wallin said public opinion was whipped up against her by 14 different leaks to the media — leaks she believes "were orchestrated in large measure by senators LeBreton and Stewart Olsen" and which were designed to cast her conduct "in the worst possible light."

The pair "could not abide the fact that I was outspoken in caucus or critical of their leadership or that my level of activity brought me into the public eye and once garnered the praise of the prime minister," Wallin said, her voice occasionally wavering.

"They resented that. They resented me being an activist senator."

LeBreton rose immediately following Wallin's speech to call her accusation "false, false, false."

LeBreton denied ever leaking information about Wallin to the media or instigating the investigation into her expenses. Indeed, LeBreton said it was a letter of complaint to Senate administration from one of Wallin's own staffers that prompted a review of her travel claims.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Europe's focus on blocking migrants at borders slammed

Safe port. Human Rights Watch wants the EU to guarantee that anyone picked up at sea will be taken to a safe European port

The European Union is using the drowning deaths of people fleeing to Europe as a pretext for ramping up border controls against unwanted migrants, a human rights group said Wednesday.

Human Rights Watch said the drowning of hundreds of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea this month should prompt the EU to chart a new policy course toward people fleeing war and dire poverty.

Leaders of the 28-nation bloc are to discuss how to avoid future boat disasters at a meeting Friday in Brussels.

"Though framed in terms of saving lives, many of the proposed policy responses reflect the EU's preoccupation with preventing departure and barring entry," Human Rights Watch said.

According to the New York-based group, about 35,000 people have crossed from North Africa to Italy and Malta this year alone — many of them fleeing persecution or fighting in Somalia, Eritrea or Syria. At least 500 have died this year, including about 365 people who drowned Oct. 3 when their boat capsized off Italy.

In May, the EU created a task force to train Libya's border guards to better control its vast frontiers. But European governments have been reluctant to provide more ways to enter the bloc legally, as demanded by rights campaigners. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

European Union rules

One EU rule that has caused particular friction stipulates that refugees have to apply for asylum in the first EU nation they enter. This has placed particular burdens on Greece, Italy and Malta.

- Human Rights Watch accused northern European countries such as Germany of blocking any meaningful reforms of the rules that allow Berlin to turn away refugees who arrived from another EU state.

Suspended Greek teachers protest austerity

High schools teachers suspended from their jobs chant anti-austerity slogans during a protest near the Greek presidential palace, in central Athens, Wednesday. The conservative-led government plans to sack 15,000 state employees by the end of 2014, and place another 25,000 in a program of mandatory suspensions and job transfers. PETROS GIANNAKOURIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kids returned to Roma parents

Ireland's justice minister says two children temporarily taken by police from their Roma parents have been returned to their families after DNA tests determined that the children were rightfully theirs.

Alan Shatter said Wednesday he had ordered the police commander to produce a report into why officers felt it necessary to take the children — a two-year-old boy and a seven-year-old girl — from their families.

In both cases, police suspected that the children might be victims of abductions because they were blond-haired and blue-eyed, unlike the rest of their immediate relatives.

Irish police were responding to public tipoffs fueled by media coverage of an alleged child-abduction case in Greece involving a blond-haired girl and a Gypsy, or Roma, family.

Human rights groups in Ireland have accused police of racism. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Stanley. Canadian sex offender held on bail in U.S.

A violent sex offender who fled Canada is being held on $100,000 bail after being accused of harassment and another sexual assault.

Michael Sean Stanley made a first court appearance Wednesday. A judge set his bail at $100,000, citing the circumstances of how he fled Canada to the United States. Wearing a red prison uniform with his hands shackled in front of him, Stanley appeared before the judge by video from the local jail.

Stanley did not speak to the judge during the brief hearing.

Michael Sean Stanley in court Wednesday in Seattle. ELAINE THOMPSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

He entered the United States earlier this month as Canadian police were searching for the 48-year-old. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Francisco

Callers mistakenly directed to phone sex line

People who tried to complain about noise from a San Francisco marathon got an earful of racy language instead.

When they called the city's 311 hotline to complain about Sunday's Nike marathon, they were incorrectly directed to a phone sex line.

City officials now say they were given the wrong number and are investigating how the mix-up occurred. The phone sex number and marathon number differed only in their prefix: 800 versus 866. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pot smokers in Vietnam digging the Canadian bud

A man rolls a joint with Canadian-grown marijuana at his room in the old quarter area of Hanoi, Vietnam, on Oct 1. Western-grown marijuana is popular among Vietnamese elite. NA SON NGUYEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cannabis. It's also appearing in Japan and South Korea

For the young Vietnamese dope smokers rolling up outside a smart Hanoi cafe, local cannabis is just not good enough. As with their Adidas caps, iPhones and Sanskrit tattoos, so with their choice of bud: only foreign will do.

Potent marijuana grown indoors in Canada and the United States is easy to buy in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, say regular smokers, and sells for up to 10 times the price of locally grown weed. That's perhaps surprising given that marijuana is easy to cultivate regionally, and bringing drugs across continents is expensive and risky.

Some experts say the trade can be explained by the dominant role Vietnamese diaspora gangs play in cultivating the drug in western countries, making sourcing the product and smuggling it to Vietnam an easier proposition than it might be otherwise.

The characteristics of cannabis use in the country also drive the trade. The drug is used mostly by foreigners and well-heeled Vietnamese, who are prepared to pay for quality. Vietnamese have long shown preferences for imported goods of all kinds — and it appears cannabis is no exception.

Smokers said one gram of Canadian weed retails for anything up to $45, the average weekly wage in the country. Mid-quality hydroponically grown marijuana sells for about $10 a gram in Canada and the United States. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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A firefighter mops up after a firestorm swept through a property in Bilpin, 75 kilometres from Sydney, Australia, Wednesday. Scores of Australians in the area had to flee their homes. ROB GRIFFITH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Military sparked fires, probe finds

The worst is over. As temperatures and winds dropped Wednesday, Blue Mountains evacuees were told they could return home

A military training exercise ignited the largest of the wildfires that have ravaged Australia's most populous state over the past week, investigators said Wednesday.

More than 100 fires have killed one man and destroyed more than 200 homes in New South Wales state since Thursday.

Mayor not impressed

"I would have hoped on a day like that — which was a dry day, a hot day, with the winds — the Australian military would have known it wouldn't be a good time to be igniting."

Mark Greenhill, mayor of the community of Blue Mountains

Investigators found that a massive fire near the city of Lithgow, west of Sydney, began Oct. 16 at a nearby Defence Department training area, and that the blaze "was started as a result of live ordnance exercises" at the army range, the Rural Fire Service said in a statement.

The Defence Department declined to comment on the investigators' findings, but had earlier confirmed that an explosive ordnance training exercise was conducted Oct. 16. The Defence Department was also investigating any link between the exercise and the fire.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Zimbabwe

Elephants attack park ranger

Zimbabwe's wildlife authority says three elephants attacked a park ranger and trampled him to death during an anti-poaching patrol in the northwestern nature reserve where more than 102 elephants have been poisoned by poachers using cyanide in past weeks.

Zimbabwe's state radio said Wednesday the veteran ranger was charged by the elephants when separated from colleagues in the remote Hwange National Park on Monday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Calif. Police kill boy, 13, who was carrying toy gun

California sheriff's deputies have shot and killed a 13-year-old boy after repeatedly telling him to drop what turned out to be a toy gun, officials and family members said.

Two deputies saw the boy walking with what appeared to be a high-powered weapon Tuesday, sheriff's Lt. Dennis O'Leary said.

The replica gun resembled an AK-47, according to a photograph released by the sheriff's office. Deputies learned after the shooting that it wasn't an actual firearm, according to O'Leary.

Rodrigo Lopez identified the boy as his son, Andy, to a newspaper and said the teen was carrying a toy gun that belonged to a friend.

It wasn't clear whether the teen pointed the replica assault rifle at the deputies or made any type of threatening gesture. The sheriff's office referred calls to the Santa Rosa Police Department, which did not immediately return a call for comment.

O'Leary said the deputies fired several rounds from their handguns immediately after issuing the orders to drop the rifle. A neighbour in the area, Brian Zastrow, told the Santa Rosa Press Democrat he heard seven shots. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

‘Luxury bishop.’ Pope expels German from diocese pending inquiry

Pope Francis expelled a German bishop from his diocese on Wednesday pending the outcome of a church inquiry into his 31 million-euro ($43-million US) new residence complex.

The Vatican didn’t say how long Bishop Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst, 53, would spend away from the diocese of Limburg but it refused calls to remove him permanently. It gave no information on where he would go or what he would do.

The Vatican said the bishop was leaving pending the outcome of a German church investigation into the expenditures and his role in the affair. Fellow bishops and lay Catholics in the diocese, however, expressed doubt that he would ever be able to return.

“This is a crisis of confidence that will be hard to overcome,” said the dean of the cathedral chapter, Guenther Geis.

Limburg’s vicar general, the Rev. Wolfgang Roesch, will run the diocese during Tebartz-van Elst’s absence, the Vatican said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

England

Village cheesed over naming rights

They make fine cheese in the English village of Stilton. Just don’t call it stilton.

British authorities said Wednesday that a local pub can’t market its blue-veined cheese as stilton because that name is protected by European Union legislation.

The Bell Inn has been forced to sell its cheese as “Bells Blue” rather than stilton.

The EU rules, based on British government guidelines, say the name can only apply to cheese from the English counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, where it has long been made. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Four generations of Royals attend prince’s christening

Prince William holds his son, Prince George, as they arrive at Chapel Royal in St James’s Palace, in London, for the christening of the three-month-old future monarch on Wednesday. JOHN STILLWELL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Biding his time. Infant Prince George joined by Queen Elizabeth II, other future kings

Dressed in a lace and satin gown designed in the 1840s, Britain’s 3-month-old future monarch, Prince George, was christened Wednesday with water from the River Jordan at a rare gathering of four generations of the royal family.

The occasion had historic overtones: The presence of Britain’s 87-year-old monarch and three future kings, Princes Charles, William and, of course, little George.

Queen Elizabeth II, usually the centre of attention, quietly ceded the spotlight to her rosy-cheeked great-grandson, who seemed to wave at her when he arrived — an illusion created by his father, Prince William, playfully moving the infant’s arm.

The private affair at the Chapel Royal at St James’s Palace was also attended by Prince Charles, next in line to the throne, and the queen’s 92-year-old husband, Prince Philip, who has shown remarkable stamina since returning to the public eye after a two-month convalescence following serious abdominal surgery.

All told, it was an exceptional day for a monarchy that seems to be basking in public affection since the 2011 wedding of William and Kate Middleton and the maturing of Prince Harry, who appears to have put his playboy days behind him.

The infant, who will head the Church of England when he becomes king, was christened with water from the River Jordan — where Christians believe Jesus Christ was baptized — by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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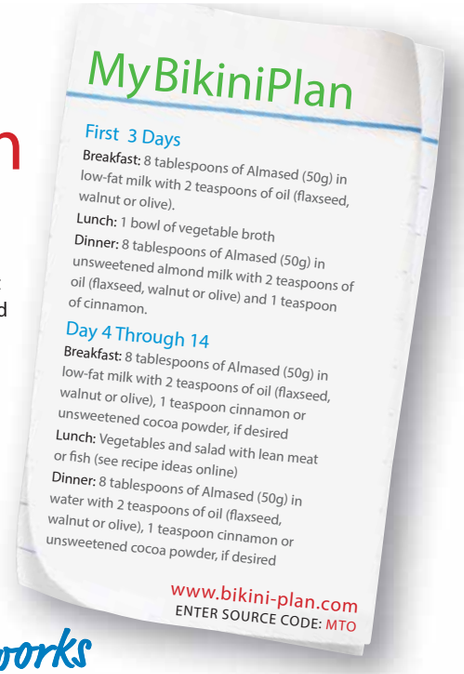
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They did it!

Four Metro Toronto staff members completed their first marathon at the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon Sunday. After four months of training, they challenged themselves in an ultimate feat of endurance.

Leader of the pack Hannah Zitner finished the 42.2-kilometre course in 3:52:16. Just five minutes behind her, Fernando Carneiro crossed the finish line at 3:57:58. Liz Brown achieved a time of 4:24:54 and Jessica Smith clocked in at 5:38:02.

The spirit of the race left its mark.

"There are so many sweet moments," Zitner says. "You see families, kids running with their parents. People really supporting each other."

The Markham Running Room's "Dream Team" runners encouraged Smith as she fought through "wood legs" pain to finish the race.

"They're amazing, kind, nice people," Smith says. "That was probably the coolest thing for me, getting that pick-me-up from these random strangers."

Brown's training and competition enabled self-discovery.

"I learned that I have more mental fortitude than I thought I did," she says, feeling happy, proud and amazed that she covered 42 kilometres while experiencing knee pain.

Whether you are running a 10K or a marathon, there is nothing like seeing the smiling faces of friends and family at the finish line. Carneiro's support team included his wife, who finished the half-marathon, friends from his running group and co-workers.

"It's an incredible feeling to be among like-minded people to cross that finish line and know that you've accomplished something together," Carneiro says.

Through the aches, pains and exhaustion, perseverance and determination prevailed. On the heels of their first marathon, each runner says they would do it all over again. – *Jennifer Melo*

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Privacy office to probe Bell's new data collection

Complaints, criticism. Telecom giant says customers will benefit by seeing ads targeted to their interests, but critics say they should offer an opt-in option

After receiving several complaints, the federal privacy commissioner's office is launching an investigation into Bell's attempt to collect data on users' TV and web habits and telephone patterns.

Following some strong customer reaction and criticisms from a consumer group and the federal New Democratic Party, Bell sent out a news release Wednesday explaining why the company wants to collect this data beginning Nov. 16.

Bell says the move will benefit customers who will see ads targeted to their interests.

The program is designed to deliver "online advertising that's most relevant to them," according to Wade Oosterman, president of Bell Mobility and Residential Services.

"Consumers who use mobile Internet services see a lot of advertising, and we want to ensure that Bell customers see the kind of advertising that actually matters to them," he said.

Critics have suggested customers should be asked to opt in, rather than opt-out.

Philippe Viel of the Montreal-based consumer protection group Union des Consommateurs told Torstar News Service that the only option is to not receive the relevant ads. Bell will still collect that data.

"It is not false, but it's sneaky," he said. "People who go to the website will believe that if they opt out, they are opting out of the whole process." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

An experience that's not to be mist

Passengers admire a rainbow over the American Falls from the Maid of the Mist on the second-to-last day of Canadian operations of the popular seasonal attraction Wednesday. CHARLES LEWIS/THE BUFFALO NEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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An Indian schoolgirl displays a bullet Wednesday allegedly fired on a school from the Pakistan side of the India-Pakistan border. The conflict over the disputed region of Kashmir was a central topic of talks between Pakistan's prime minister and the U.S. president. CHANNI ANAND/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pakistan, U.S. talk drones and security

First Obama-Sharif meeting. Leaders pledge co-operation, though key issue unresolved

Seeking to improve a rocky relationship, U.S. President Barack Obama and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday pledged co-operation on the security issues that have strained ties between their nations. But the sources of the long-standing tensions did briefly bubble to the surface.

Speaking alongside Obama at the White House, Sharif said he raised the issue of American drone strikes during their meeting, "emphasizing the need for an end to such strikes." For his part, Obama made no mention of drones, which have stoked widespread resentment in Pakistan where many believe the targeted strikes by the armed unmanned aircraft kill large numbers of civilians.

Despite Pakistani concerns, the U.S. has shown no indication it is willing to abandon the attacks. The Pakistani government secretly supported the strikes in the past, and U.S. officials claim some key leaders still do.

Wednesday marked the first time Obama and Sharif have met since the Pakistani leader took office in June. And the mere fact that the talks took place was seen as a sign of progress after a particularly sour period. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bahrain

Mourners, police violently clash at funeral for teen

The funeral for a 17-year-old boy in Bahrain who authorities said died while carrying explosives descended into chaos Wednesday as mourners clashed with police in the troubled Gulf kingdom.

Plumes of tear gas rose over the cemetery where mourners buried Ali al-Sabagh, who authorities said died Tuesday after an explosion west of the capital.

Hundreds of anti-government protesters and mourners faced off with police, as an Associated Press reporter saw some set fire to tires in the street and others throw gasoline bombs. Police responded with tear gas and stun grenades, as officers closed the main highway into the city because of the fighting. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Syria and area

13 women freed — may be linked to hostage deal

The Syrian government released 13 female detainees, according to an official and an activist group, in a move that appeared to be part of an ambitious regional prisoner exchange.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights on Wednesday said the women walked out of the headquarters of the Damascus provincial government Tuesday. A Syrian government official confirmed the release. It was not immediately clear whether the women released were part of a complicated hostage swap last week brokered by Qatar and the Palestinian Authority that saw Syrian rebels release nine Lebanese Shiite Muslims, while Lebanese gunmen freed two Turkish pilots. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine

Device not the real McCoy: Prosecutors

Damn it, Jim! I'm a (alleged) fraudster, not a Health Canada official.

U.S. claims man bilked Florida bank with device that could 'beam' medical information to physicians

Prosecutors are calling the McCoy Home Health Tablet, named after Star Trek's Dr. McCoy, right, pure science fiction. ZADE ROSENTHAL/PARAMOUNT PICTURES/FILE

An Illinois man faces charges after he allegedly convinced a company to finance a healthcare tablet computer named after Star Trek's Dr. McCoy as part of a scheme prosecutors are calling pure science fiction.

Howard Leventhal, who was arrested at his home north of Chicago earlier this week, is charged with fraudulently impersonating Health Canada officials including former deputy minister Glenda Yeates and with bilking a Florida firm out of $800,000 US.

Prosecutors allege the scheme came complete with phony domain names, telephone numbers and email addresses that closely resembled those used at Health Canada.

They say Leventhal promoted the McCoy Home Health Tablet, a telemedicine device he said could beam detailed patient data instantaneously to physicians and other licensed medical care providers.

Leventhal brokered an agreement with Paragon Financial Group, Inc. of Fort Lauderdale that saw Paragon "advance" cash in exchange for its right to collect a larger sum of money purportedly owed to Neovision by Health Canada, the prosecution says.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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TORONTO HYDRO

$6 for tea? Starbucks aims to make stodgy drink of British grannies cool

Starbucks is trying to make tea trendy, with plans to open its first "tea bar" in New York City.

The Seattle-based company says Teavana Fine Teas + Teavana Tea Bar will serve sweets and other food including flatbreads, salads and small plates ranging in price from about $3 to $15. Drink prices will range from $3 to $6, and include novelties such as a Spiced Mandarin Oolong tea and carbonated teas.

The menu of food and freshly made drinks is a switch for Teavana, a chain of about 300 stores that sell boxed and loose tea and accessories. Teavana stores are mainly in shopping malls, but Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz said he plans to expand the footprint to include more locations in urban areas. The company plans to add brewed tea and food to more Teavana stores.

The opening of the New York City store on Thursday comes after Starbucks bought Teavana last year. The company has said it plans to use the acquisition to make tea a bigger part of American culture, as it has with coffee.

Starbucks hopes Teavana "tea bars," featuring $3 to $6 drinks, will be a hit. CANDICE CHOI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bank of Canada

Interest rates likely to stay low

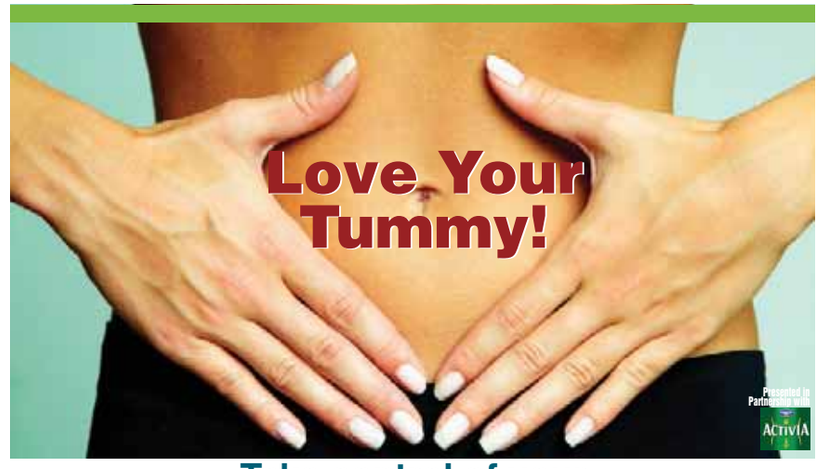
The Bank of Canada has pointedly dropped its warning about the potential for higher interest rates, triggering a sell-off in Canadian dollars that pushed the loonie almost one cent lower Wednesday and raised speculation that rates could actually fall further.

The bank also lowered the anticipated growth path for the economy, shaving the projected pace of expansion for this year as well as in 2014 and 2015. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sochi marketing

Olympians to get $900 smartphones

Athletes who fail to clinch gold at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics can take home something else: a $900 smartphone from Samsung. The company is giving a smartphone to all athletes competing at the Sochi Games. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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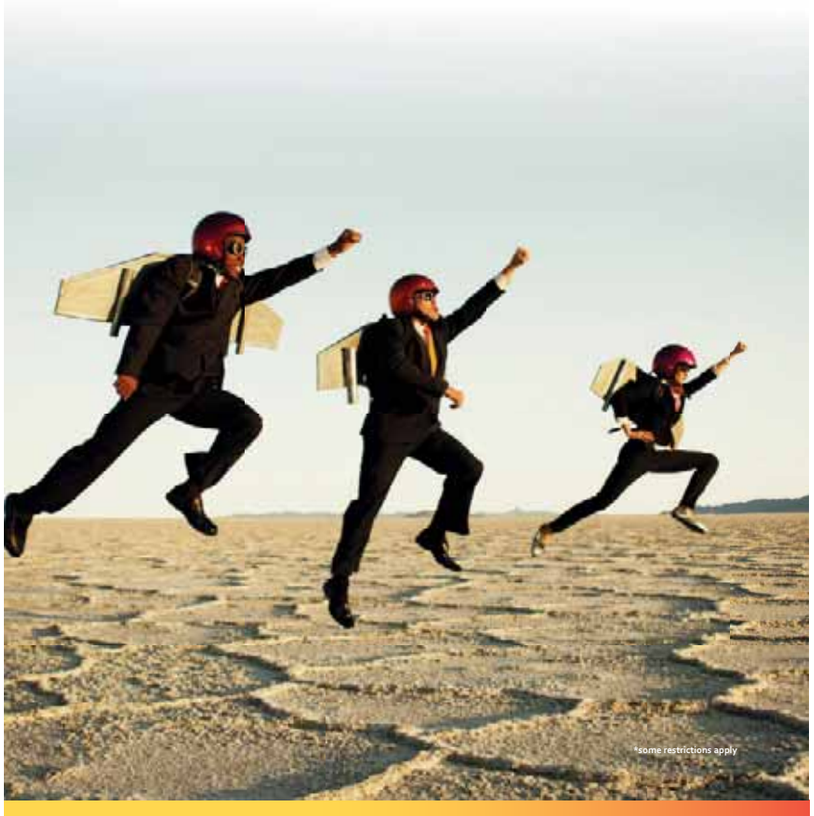

www.hrpa.ca/METRO

Journalists Glenn Greenwald, left, and Jeremy Scahill will help lead an ambitious news outlet focused on "government transparency and accountability." SILVIA IZQUIERDO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Will $250M news experiment work?

Brainchild of eBay founder. Only time will tell if the well-funded venture led by group of activist journalists is able to reach lofty goals

KIERON MONKS
Metro World News in London

The biggest national security breach in U.S. history was a warm-up for Glenn Greenwald. The activist reporter who published Edward Snowden's revelations is to launch a well-funded news outlet with a priority to share secrets from the world of surveillance, raising fears that U.S. national security will suffer.

EBay founder Pierre Omidyar has pledged a minimum $250 million to the "mass media organization" and specifies a focus on "government transparency and accountability." Along with Greenwald, fellow NSA publisher Laura Poitras will be a founding member, as well as Jeremy Scahill — the man who exposed the Blackwater scandal in Iraq and CIA torture practices.

Omidyar has been coy on details — the location and launch date have not been announced — but the billionaire is known to support a horizontal model giving more freedom to journalists than traditional media. Greenwald has said this freedom was a major incentive for leaving The Guardian, which redacted many of Snowden's documents for security reasons, although the published reports were still explosive enough to cause the resignations of leading NSA directors.

Thousands of the documents remain unpublished.

"I think Omidyar is mission-driven," Jay Rosen, director of journalism at New York University and close to both Greenwald and Omidyar, told Metro.

"What he gets out of it is the prestige of ... excellent, public-service journalism ... that reveals what would have remained hidden."

Great expectations

"We expect (they) will produce hard-hitting investigative journalism on the ever-expanding surveillance state."

A source at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, which is organizing an anti-NSA rally

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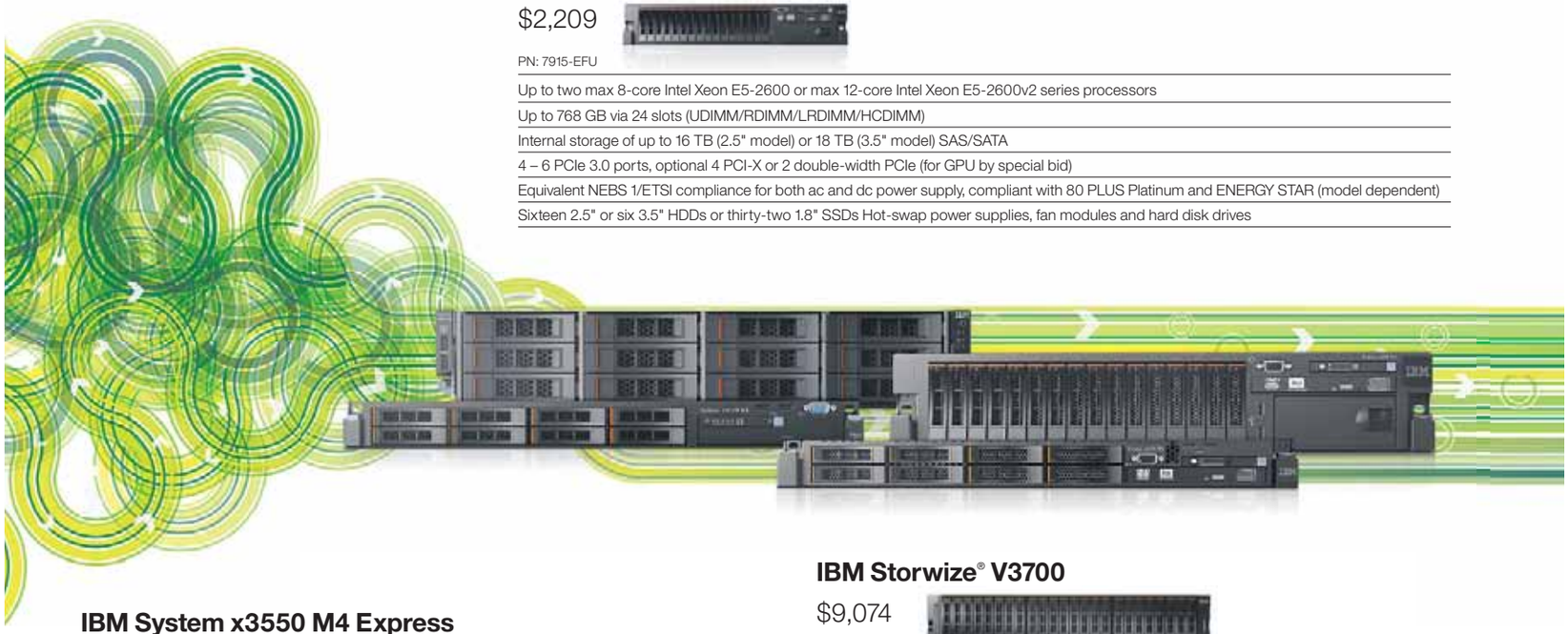

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BURPING COWS ARE A GAS, GAS, GAS

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

In these uncertain times of huge, unprecedented disasters like climate change and the Senate, it's nice to know that there are still stories that fill us with awe, still moments that make us think, "it's not such a bad life, after all."

Which is why, this week, I'd like to talk about burping cows. According to an Oct. 21 story by the Reuters news agency, Argentine scientists have devised a system that can tap directly into a cow's digestive tract and remove up to 300 litres of pure methane per cow per day, "enough energy to keep a refrigerator running for 24 hours."

This story raises all sorts of interesting questions. Like, my fridge can run on intestinal gas? Do I even need the cow?

But before I follow that line of thought to places we can't return from, here's an even bigger question: How come I never get journalism assignments like this? When I was a field reporter, I was always sent to events that had no effect on anybody, like city council meetings.

Yet some lucky Reuters reporter was sent to watch top Argentine agricultural technologists channeling digestive gases from inside a cow through high-tech tubing to a tank on its back.

I like to imagine it was just like NASA mission control: When the burps successfully entered the tank, scientists high-fived and whooped while a mission commander removed his headset and heaved a relieved sigh, possibly methane-based.

Though it would have been a fun assignment, it's my duty as a serious journalist to stress that this isn't all fun and gas. As Canadians, we have to be concerned that Argentina now leads the race toward cow-excretion-collection supremacy, probably because the world was so focused on Iran. Argentines: First they get the Pope, then they get the power.

Let's not understate the gold mine here: Cows produce what scientists call a "heap ton" of gas because cows have a lot of stomachs , including the Greater Stomach, the Lesser Stomach, the Secret Stomach behind the bookcase, and the Ultra-Deluxe Stomach (not available on all models, ask dealer for details).

You know how you feel after you've had four burgers and you're lying on the couch and your stomach starts making noises that seem to say, "All non-vital personnel, please clear the area"? Imagine how that would feel if you had multiple stomachs! For one thing, you could win every belching contest from here to Buenos Aires.

Even if such dreams never come to pass (get it?), it's clear that belching cows are now another technological advance to consider for countries seeking energy independence. Countries like Canada. Are you pondering what I'm pondering? Given the other big news stories in Canada, I think we can all agree that Canada's next course of action to slow climate change and greatly improve the Senate involves bringing long lengths of tubing to Parliament Hill.

At the very least, our fridges will run well. Give it a sober second thought.

ZOOM

My pet monster

DAMIAN DOVARGANES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A hairy, scary 30-year commitment

A tarantula peeks out of his webbing filling the entire container in Los Angeles. This is one of the 50 tarantulas nurse Dee Reynolds cares for at her home. Tarantulas are the heaviest, hairiest, scariest spiders on the planet. They have fangs, claws and barbs. They can regrow body parts and be as big as dinner plates, and the females eat the males after mating. But there are many people who call these creepy critters a pet or a passion and insist their beauty is worth the risk of a bite.

Unlike Fido or Whiskers, you can't cuddle with them, dress them for Halloween or play catch. They can cost hundreds of dollars, but they can also live for 30 years. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

They grow up so fast ...

The tarantula starts life as a sling — short for spiderling — so they can be as small as a fingernail and grow as large as a dinner plate. It eats mostly live crickets, cockroaches and some mice. The spider turns prey into stew by pumping in venom through its fangs. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bites not so bad (usually)

All tarantulas can bite, but owners say it's no worse than a bee sting, unless you are allergic.

- Although there's no documented case of a fatal bite, some have more potent venom than others, and there is no anti-venom, so you treat the symptoms and hope for the best.

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

It's a familiar problem that likely affects somebody you love: The agony that comes with waiting for your Candy Crush lives to refill. But don't worry, there's plenty of other free mobile games to save you from doing anything too productive.

Paint It Back:

A game of nonograms, which are grid-based puzzles that label each row and column with numerical clues for which squares must be shaded to reveal a picture. They're also known as Picross to Nintendo DS fans. If none of that makes sense to you, just know that it's good brain-teasing fun and Paint It Back is designed to ease you in gently. (iOS)

Candy Mania:

It wouldn't be unfair to say this game was, um, "inspired" by Candy Crush. But there are enough twists on the gameplay — not to mention the continual introduction of new mechanics — that it never really feels like you're playing the same game over again. (iOS/Android)

Pocket Mine:

Take control of a miner and start digging, collecting as many precious metals as you can until your pick shatters. Take that cash and upgrade your picks while acquiring upgrades like exploding coal and volatile grenade boxes, all set to a sepia-toned 8-bit soundtrack.(iOS)

Twitter

A U.S. man called the cops after his Jell-O went missing from the work fridge. What's your anti-lunch theft strategy?

I go out of my way to make really disgusting lunches so no one would want to steal them. Almost inedible. Really gross stuff.
@Canucklehead_ca

Tape a note explaining you're constipated and it contains a strong medicinal laxative.
@TradeMarck

Fake Moldy Lunch Bag!
@danfwhite

Super hot sauce. The thief is the sweaty person with a really red face.
@FrenchmanCanada

Label lunch bag "Poisonous snake specimen". For bonus points, actually put snake in.
@Cazzy

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Film like no one's watching

TIFF Lightbox. Take it from Nicolas Winding Refn, who at 43 is probably a bit young for a retrospective

BACKSTAGE PASS
Ian Gormely
scene@metronews.ca

"Film is pornography," says Nicolas Winding Refn. "Become a pin-up artist."

The Danish filmmaker, best known for his collaborations with Ryan Gosling in Drive and Only God Forgives, is discussing lessons learned from Fear X.

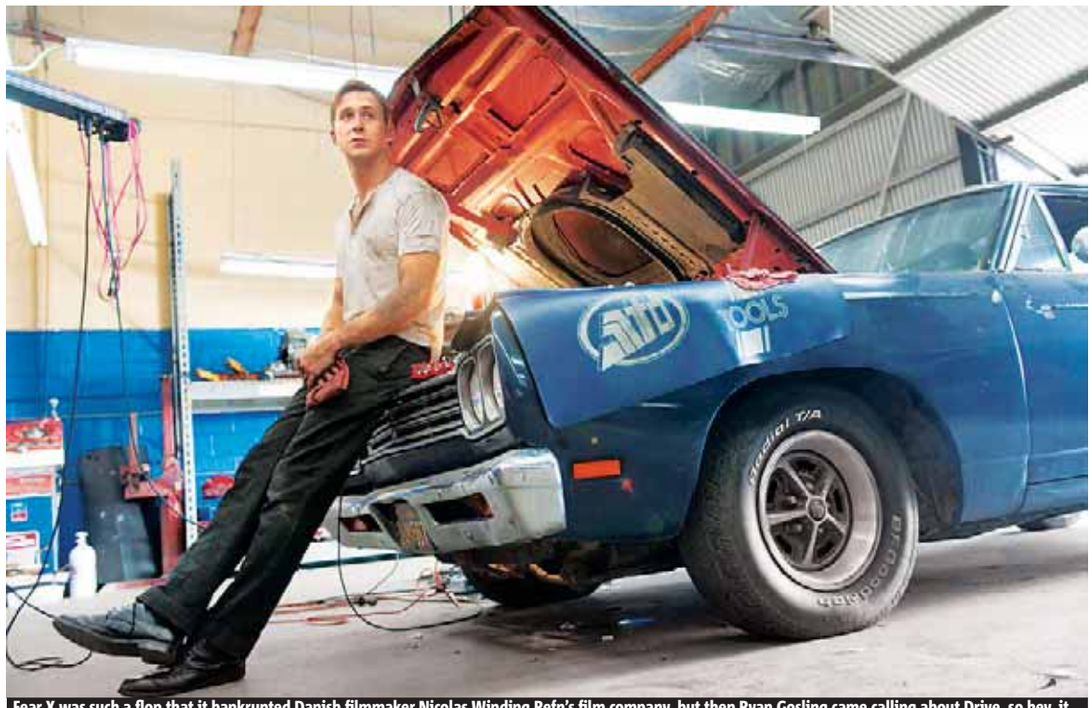
The 2003 film, his first for Hollywood, was a commercial failure, bankrupting Winding Refn's film company.

"Make films about what you want to see," he says. "Make them inexpensive and hopefully other people will like it."

Fear X marks its improbable return to the big screen this week at the TIFF Bell Light Box, thanks to a new retrospective of Winding Refn's work. Blood on His Hands showcases 10 of his movies and Winding Refn is introducing Pusher and Bleeder tonight live via Skype.

Though honoured, Winding Refn — who is only 43 — admits news of the retrospective caught him off guard. "I was like, what are you trying to tell me? Is it over?"

His triumphant return to Hollywood was equally improbable. Following Fear X's untimely demise, the director returned to his roots, making a pair of well-received sequels to his feature debut, Pusher. He gained further attention in Europe with the biopic Bronson and Viking epic Valhalla Rising, before Gosling hand picked him to direct Drive.



Fear X was such a flop that it bankrupted Danish filmmaker Nicolas Winding Refn's film company, but then Ryan Gosling came calling about Drive, so hey, it all worked out. CONTRIBUTED

Music

Setting the mood

To say that music plays an important role in Winding Refn's films is an understatement. It's hard to imagine the pervasive mood of unease in Drive without Cliff Martinez's pulsing, synth-driven soundtrack. Music is a consideration very early in the filmmaker's creative process. "It can help you emotionally open up," he says. He likes to bring in composers as early in the process as possible. Martinez only had five weeks to complete work on Drive, but for Only God Forgives, Winding Refn was in talks with the musician from the film's inception.

"Nobody in Hollywood wanted to make Drive," he says. "We just made it as an independent film — my world."

Drive was a surprise hit paving the way for this year's Only God Forgives which received both a cheers and jeers at Cannes. "You have to make (a movie) more for the people that are going to love it knowing that the people that are going to hate it are going to hate it even more," he says. "I try to make every movie as if it were my last."

With Blood on His Hands: the Films of Nicolas Winding Refn, to Nov. 5 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King St. West. See tiff.net for show times.

Danish filmmaker Nicolas Winding Refn. CONTRIBUTED

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Why Redford agreed to go it alone in solo seafaring drama

All is Lost. The actor is by himself on camera for the entire film as he battles the elements and faces his fate

RICHARD CROUSE
scene@metronews.ca

How did director J.C. Chandor convince screen legend Robert Redford to drop everything and star in a one-man movie?

"He has a good ego on him, so he loved it," says Chandor. "Just kidding. Actually he does have an ego, but he knows it, which is partially what makes him great."

In All is Lost Redford plays a character called "our man," a sailor on a solo yacht trip on the Indian Ocean. When his 30-foot boat collides with an abandoned shipping container he must use all his resources to survive.

The actor is alone on camera for the entire film, battling the elements and facing his fate.

"I think he realized it was a wonderful time in his life to get rid of all the distractions," says Chandor. "He has an unbelievably complicated and interesting life with Sundance, the Sundance Institute, his non-profit work and directing.

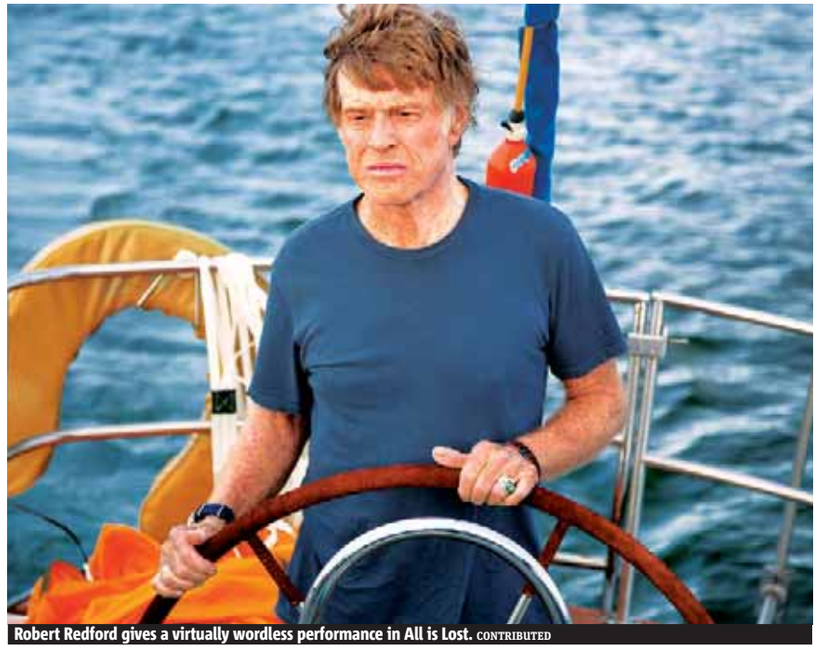
"His life is a bit of a race but he came to Mexico for two-and-a-half months (to shoot the film). His personal secretary was the only one who knew how to get in touch with him so all that other stuff faded away and for a two-and-a-half month period we went on this very intense journey.

Silence is golden

"I think he realized it was a wonderful time in his life to get rid of all the distractions."
Director J.C. Chandor

"By the end of it we had gone someplace together, as a crew, an actor and a director. He really loved exposing himself both emotionally and as a performer more than he ever had."

Critical reaction has been strong and Redford's name is being tossed around as a shoo-in for a best actor Oscar nomination. "He was able to do these very complex emotional transitions but you don't just see the shift (as a viewer) you actually feel like you've been on a little bit of the journey with him."


Robert Redford gives a virtually wordless performance in All is Lost. CONTRIBUTED

It is a raw, emotional performance unlike anything Redford has done before on screen. In his virtually wordless performance the actor becomes a blank canvas that viewers may project their own notions of the meaning of life, death and everything in between.

"If the film is working for you you'll see the man go, 'Don't freak out, pull yourself together,'" says Chandor. "(Redford) and I talked a lot about that. We are not people that have that kind of dialogue out loud so we internalized it.

"Our hope was that by internalizing it we would create a far more open book for the audience to bring their own hopes and fears to it.

"What you're dealing with is one person coming to grips with death, alone."

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SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 34

First line, last line and Mochrie fills in the rest

New book. Toronto-based comedian puts his own zany spin on a handful of classic tales

The opening story in the debut book from improv master Colin Mochrie begins with the opening lines of Arthur Conan Doyle's A Study in Scarlet, describing Sherlock Holmes seated at a breakfast table.

What follows is far from elementary, as the famed fictional detective dresses in drag and racks his brain — not in order to solve a crime, but to figure out how to do standup comedy.

In his newly published collection of short stories, Not Quite the Classics (Viking Canada), Mochrie takes the first and last lines from 12 famous novels and re-imagines the middle.

The approach stems from the improv game First Line, Last Line, in which the skit's beginning and ending are supplied by the audience and the performers invent the rest.

"When I was first asked by my agent to write a book — apparently he does not like me having free time — because I have no experience at writing, I thought I would use my improv experience to help me guide my way through this," Mochrie said in a recent interview.

Using the first and last lines, "I figured ... two per cent of the book is written, so I'm set," he added with a laugh.

The Toronto-based Whose Line Is It Anyway? star said he was a shy child who read a lot, but he never wanted to write a book until his agent suggested it.

He was convinced to take on the project by actress Debra McGrath, his wife who "does a lot of writing," is "incredibly disciplined" and "incredibly supportive."

"Actually, I think I'm writing this book because of her, because she's a very positive person. I am less so, much less so," said the typically self-deprecating Scottish native, who was recently named Canadian comedy person of the year at The Canadian Comedy Awards.

"But she has this thing, and she's actually talked me into doing it: There's a thing in improv called, 'Yes, And,' where you accept people's ideas and then you build on that, so it's always positive. We've kind of talked about, in the last couple of years, saying yes to things that we ordinarily would say no to.

"I've found it leads you to these adventures you never would've taken the chance on, and writing a book was something I never thought about, so I thought, 'Well, I'll use Deb's Yes, And thing and see where it takes me."

The TV actor said he chose the stories according to whether they had first and last lines that inspired him and yet were vague enough.

The first one he tackled was Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat, which he turned into a poem about a zombie invasion.

"It was the first book I read as a child; it was the first book I read to my son, so I know it really well, and it rhymes and it's easy," said Mochrie, who performs with his longtime improv partner Brad Sherwood at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Toronto on Oct. 30.

"So I thought that would be a nice way to ease into it, and it was actually fairly easy to write and pain-free. I thought, 'Oh, this is what the rest of the (project) is going to be like.' I was wrong. Totally wrong. Absolutely, completely, 100 per cent wrong."

Despite the challenges he faced, Mochrie managed to inject the stories with the same charm, humour and zany scenarios he's brought to his improv performances.

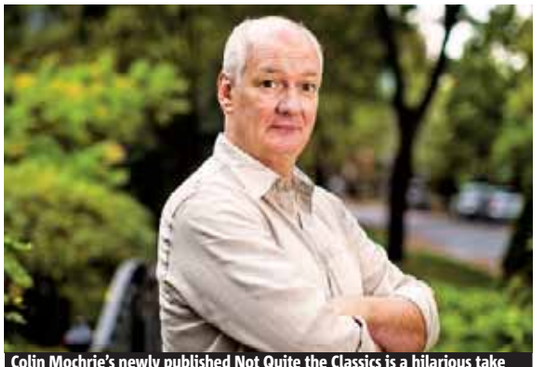
There's the one inspired by Herman Melville's Moby Dick, in which a balding actor abuses the powers of a magical toupée to advance his career.

Mochrie, who's been the butt of bald jokes himself, said that's one of the most personal stories. (For the record: He's never worn a toupée.) "Bald jokes don't bother me at this point. It's been my bread and butter, but I always wonder: How come someone can come up and just do a bald joke at me and I can't mention that they're obese or missing an eye or something? I can't, I just can't."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Beware the colon exams

The story that was perhaps the most demanding, at least physically, was the one inspired by Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five. Without spoiling the tale, the premise involves "the unluckiest man in history" and a colon exam that goes awry.



Colin Mochrie's newly published Not Quite the Classics is a hilarious take on 12 famous books. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Iron Man's soft spot is a few family secrets

Spoiler alert.
New comic book plot line finds Tony Stark in filial funk

Tony Stark's always been a man of many talents for whom surprise is a rare thing.

But the avenging philanthropic billionaire — better known for the high-tech armour he wears as Iron Man — finds himself felled by not one, but two, family secrets that has him questioning his place in the world and why the reality of his origin was kept from him.

The big reveal came in the pages of Iron Man No. 17, out yesterday in comic shops, written by Kieron Gillen, illustrated by Carlo Pagulayan and Scott Hanna, lettered by Joe Caramagna and edited by Mark Paniccia.

In it Gillen brought the long-simmering story to its conclusion with Stark finding out that not only is he — again, spoilers — adopted, but that his parents, Howard and Maria, had a son — imbued with alien technology proffered by the rogue android 451 — who has been hidden away from the world, laden with unknown abilities and, perhaps, powers.

Gillen calls it a new challenge for Stark, one that is closer to home and more down to earth than his normal conflicts, which have included villainous masterminds, god-like alien intelligences and mechanical behemoths, among others.

"What could I do to challenge the characters' core conception of their self," Gillen said in an interview of the revelations which find Tony both accepting of them yet still experiencing a swirl of emotion as the facts of his life come out in full view and meeting his brother, Arno, who has been in a hospital his entire life, wanting for nothing, but an enigma regardless.

"When you discover something about yourself, you reprocess. How does it churn in the gut? How do you re-examine your life?" said Gillen. "It's a completely different prism in how you study yourself."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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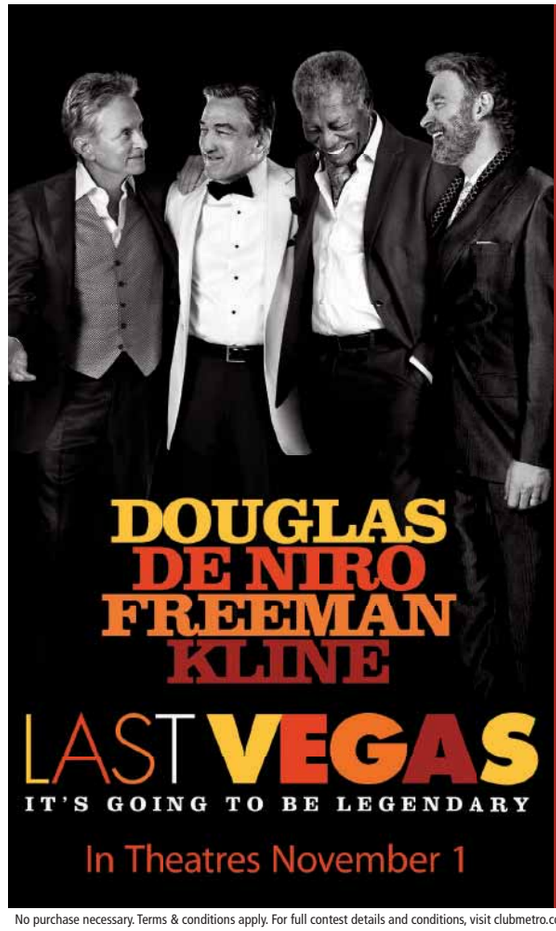

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Britney Jean is just a stressed out mother

Spread-thin Spears. With a new album and Las Vegas show, pop singer is juggling mothering and career

Britney Spears may take on a sexy pop star persona in the video for her latest single Work B— , but at home she says she feels like a "crazy mom."

Speaking in London recently, the 31-year-old singer says these days she juggles the demands of an international singing career with taking care of her two sons, Sean, 8, and Jayden, 7.

"Once you've done a shoot ... you have to come in and do homework and fix dinner twice and it's a lot of work," she said. "But I think as women we just manage it, we make it work."

Spears says she worked hard with her fitness trainer to get into top shape for her new video, sticking to two or three small meals each day. The American singer admitted, however, that she struggled to stave off food cravings in the weeks leading up to the video shoot, saying: "I love to eat my popcorn at night!"

And the first thing she ate afterward? "Just chocolate, chocolate, chocolate," she said.

Work B— is the lead single from Spears' 8th studio album Britney Jean — the name her family calls her — and she says it's her most personal album to date. Produced with will.i.am, Spears co-wrote every track, including a song about her split with Jason Trawick in January.

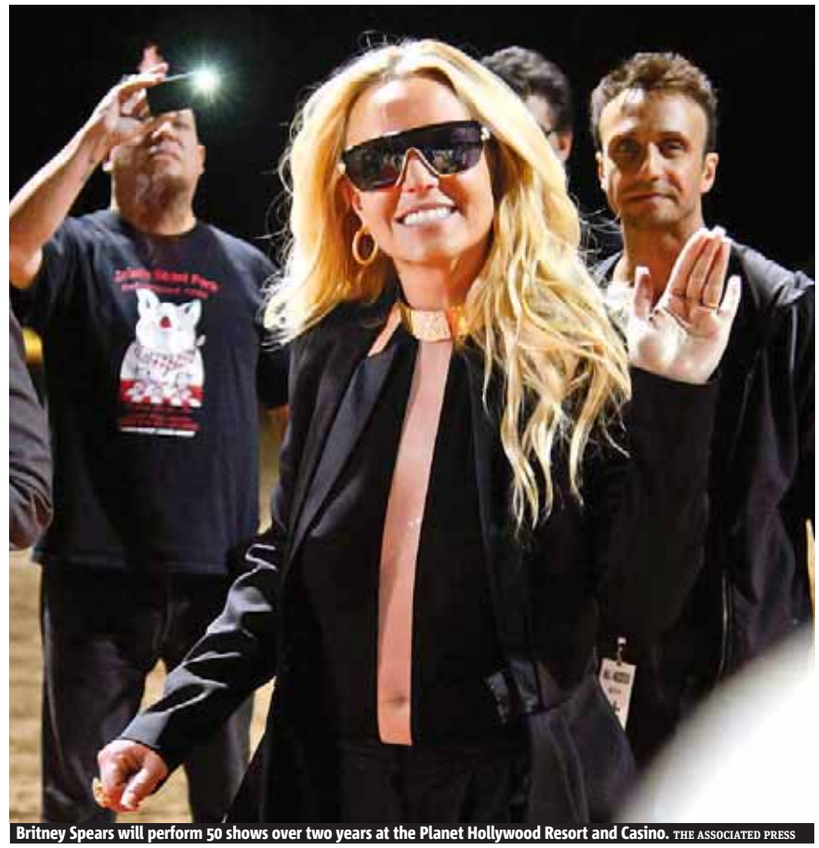
"'I think it will make girls not feel alone in this situation," she explained. "When they're alone in their room and they broke up with their boyfriend, they have a song they can go to and listen to, just makes them feel better about themselves."

Not content with just a new single and a new album, the singer is also preparing for a Las Vegas residency at the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino. In a show titled Britney: Piece of Me, Spears will perform 50 dates over two years. The Grammy-winner says she has a vocal coach to strengthen her voice for the show. She described the process as "grueling" — but says she can't wait for the experience. "I know I'll be nervous, but I'm going to be excited, too. It's going to be cool," she said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Great time for pop ladies

Spears feels it's a good time for women in pop music right now, citing the success of Rihanna, Lady Gaga, Madonna and Taylor Swift as her inspiration. "There's so many strong, powerful women in pop music culture today," she said.

- **Dates.** Britney Jean is out Dec. 3 and Britney: Piece of Me debuts in Las Vegas on Dec. 27.



Britney Spears will perform 50 shows over two years at the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Why Underwood is over the moon

Flying into fall. Between hosting the CMAs, performing in a live TV musical and her NFL gig, Carrie is a busy gal

The end of the year looks busy for Carrie Underwood, and she couldn't be happier.

The six-time Grammy winning singer will host the Country Music Association Awards for the sixth time. You can see her every week singing the opening on Sunday Night Football. And for one night in December, she will star in a live television version of The Sound of Music.

The 30-year-old star told The Associated Press Tuesday night on the red carpet of the TJ Martell Foundation gala, where she was one of the night's honourees, that she's nervous doing something she's never done before. But then she realized, "None of us have. This is a live show on TV. So this is definitely a challenge for all of us."

She equated the live singing and acting as "going to a Broadway show, but you're in your living room."

The Sound of Music airs Dec. 5 on NBC with Underwood playing Maria alongside True Blood vampire Stephen Moyer. He portrays Captain von Trapp. Broadway veterans — and Tony winners — Audra McDonald, Laura Benanti, and Christian Borle round out the cast as Mother Abbess, Elsa and Max, respectively.

While the Nashville-based Underwood is no stranger to performing before millions of people on live television — she won the fourth season of American Idol — she felt she needed more preparation, so she showed up in New York three weeks early.

"I wanted to be here and have all my lines memorized and everything and be ready for it. It's been really wonderful," Underwood said.

"Audra and Laura are incredible. Stephen's great. It's nice to be surrounded by that much talent."

Before doing that show, the multi-platinum selling artist returns to her hosting duties on the CMAs. She's also nominated for three awards, including album of the year and song of the year. While she and co-host Brad Paisley have got it down to a science, she doesn't see the experience as old hat.

"You never know what's going to happen with us hosting," Underwood joked, referring to her and Paisley.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hockey

Carrie's NHL analysis

Underwood's husband, Mike Fisher, is the Nashville Predator's star centre. As such, Underwood has had to brush up on her hockey knowledge. Here's what she sees for the Nashville season: "They got off to a little bit of a rocky start, but definitely getting some momentum. I feel like my husband right now. I know what he feels like now. I feel there's some really great, new young talent," she said. "My hubby, he's been out for the past couple of games with a foot fracture thing. But he'll be back on the ice, ASAP."

Carrie Underwood will play Maria in a live TV production of The Sound of Music on Dec. 5. GETTY IMAGES

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According to a recent Halloween shopping survey released by Value Village, TV shows are a popular inspiration for costumes, including The Walking Dead (zombies) and Duck Dynasty (camouflage and beards). TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

Let your creativity run wild with costumes

JANE DOUCET
For Metro

Trick-or-treaters are getting their Halloween costume inspiration from pop culture once again.

According to the recent annual Halloween shopping survey released by the thrift retailer Value Village, top trends point to camouflage and bushy beards à la Duck Dynasty, and zombies from The Walking Dead.

Similar to past years, nearly 50 per cent of survey respondents think movies and TV shows provide the best costume ideas, and almost 40 per cent said they put in more effort to wear something different every year because they know pictures of them in costume will be posted on social media outlets such as Facebook and Pinterest.

Here are several trends for this Halloween as revealed in the Value Village survey:

Camouflage rules

Nearly one in two costume wearers plan to deck themselves out like the Robertson men of Duck Dynasty in camo and big beards as a group look. That's more than those who would choose the Royal Family or Kim, Kanye and baby Nori.

Zombies come close

For the third year in a row, survey respondents chose The Walking Dead as the TV show that most inspires their costume.

Channelling hip-hop artist Macklemore

Thanks to his Thrift Shop anthem, almost one in two respondents are considering finding a costume at a thrift store.

Creativity is key

Nearly one-quarter of respondents think you can tell a lot about someone's personality based on their costume. To stand out, 41 per cent of those planning to wear a costume will get creative and create their own instead of buying a prepackaged one. Only four per cent will wear the same costume every year.

Each Value Village location has dedicated "costume consultants" who are specially trained to help people find exactly what they need. Stores have been hosting free Halloween "costume catwalk" fashion shows showcasing the most popular looks at 3 p.m. every Thursday in October.

Safety. Trick-or-treat tips

Every year in the days leading up to Oct. 31, police forces across the country ask Canadians to help make the spookiest night of the year also the safest.

"The most important thing is for kids to be able to see and be seen," says Const. Donald Jenkins of Halifax Regional Police's Community Relations Crime Prevention division.

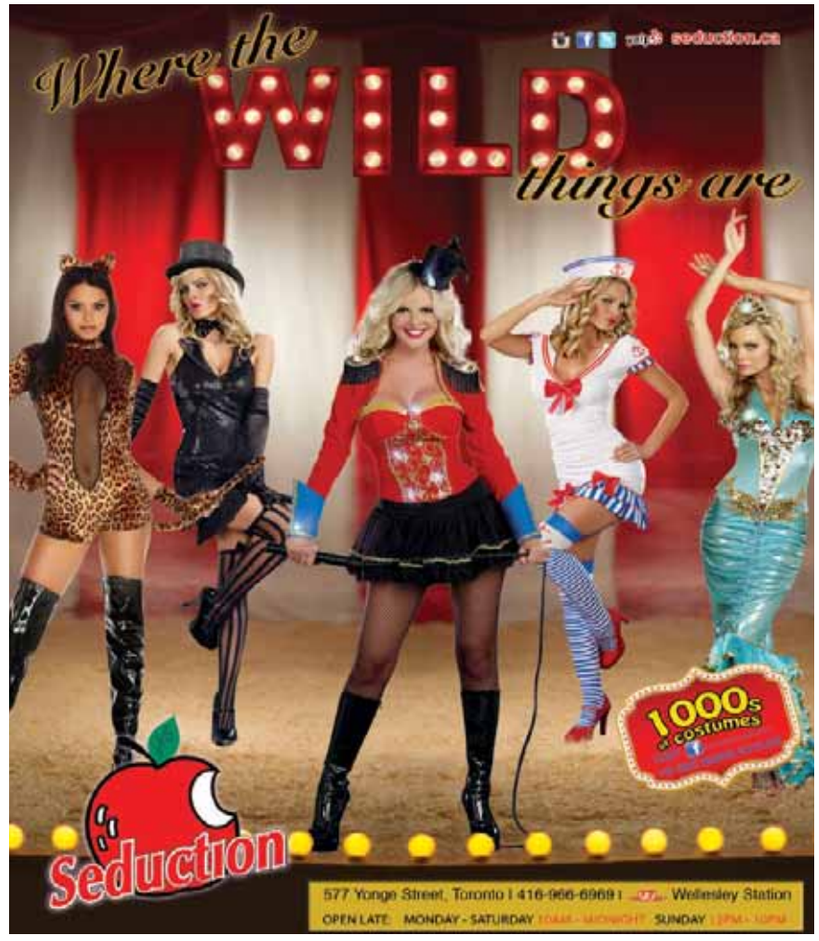
That means costumes should be brightly coloured or reflective and shouldn't restrict vision or movement so kids can clearly see people and vehicles and to prevent them from tripping and falling.

Here are some other tips to help keep the little ghouls and goblins out of harm's way:

- Try to limit crossing the street. Go down one side of the street and up the other to reduce the number of times you cross.
- Carry a small flashlight. "This is good for both kids and parents because it helps make them more visible, especially to vehicles," Jenkins said. Parents can also attach glow sticks to their kids' costumes.
- Flammable materials, flowing skirts, baggy sleeves and oversized costumes can all be hazards around candles or flames. Look for costumes, beards and wigs that are labelled "flame resistant." Costumes made from nylon or heavyweight polyester are best.
- Never allow children to enter a stranger's home or car to get a treat. If you are handing out the goodies, don't invite little ones you don't know into your home.
- Look over all of the loot before the kids dive in. "Treats should be tightly wrapped like they would be straight from the manufacturer," Jenkins said. If anything looks like it has been tampered with, put it in the garbage.
- Check the evening weather forecast, then dress kids appropriately. Costumes should be able to fit over warm clothing or a raincoat.
- Don't let small kids venture out alone, even in what you consider to be a safe neighbourhood. "At least one responsible adult should take a child or group of children door to door," Jenkins said.

JANE DOUCET

Never allow children to enter a stranger's home or car to get a treat. COLOURBOX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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Katharine McPhee

Married McPhee caught kissing married director

American Idol alum Katharine McPhee has been caught locking lips with her former Smash director Michael Morris after an intimate lunch date, according to Life & Style. The only problem? They're both married — McPhee to performer-turned-producer Nick Cokas and Morris to actress Mary McCormack. McPhee and Cokas "have been separated for six months," a source says. "Nick continues to co-manage her music." But the status of Morris and McCormack's marriage is unclear.

Forget it girls, there'll be no 50 Shades of McConaughey

Matthew McConaughey

A whole lot of actors are being considered to replace Charlie Hunnam as Christian Grey in the Fifty Shades of Grey movie, but don't include Matthew McConaughey on that list. "I've heard of it, yeah. I have not read the book. I don't even know what the book is about," he tells E! News when pressed on the subject. "I'd be making up an answer if I told you any more."

The Word

Lohan and posse hit wrong notes in Karaoke bar

Apparently Lindsay Lohan doesn't need booze to get into trouble during a night on the town. The troubled actress was reportedly "insanely belligerent" after an all-night party in a private karaoke room at a New York City bar, according to the NY Daily News. While Lohan was overheard insisting she wasn't drinking, her hangers-on drained a bottle of Jameson whiskey and left the room littered with bottles and trash, sources say. Lohan is said to have pleaded with the staff to keep the bar open once closing time hit, and when the staff refused the Mean Girls star reportedly summoned the police and complained that she and her friends had been held captive in the karaoke room. No police report was filed.

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@bobsaget
When someone says something negative to you, turn it into a positive. Tell them you want to sleep with their mother.

Katy Perry and John Mayer. ALL IMAGES GETTY

Mayer's marriage proposal to girlfriend Perry 'a question of when' not if

Katy Perry and John Mayer are getting so serious that news of an engagement is all but inevitable at this point, according to Us Weekly. "Everyone knows it's just a question of when John will propose," a source says. Perry and Mayer, who have been dating for more than a year — with a three-month break earlier this year — "realize they must be together," the source adds. "They Skype and text all day. John always checks in before bed."

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SS 14's golden girls

Shimmer and shine. Pat McGrath's glittering brows at Dior and Dries Van Noten's side partings fashioned with gold leaves have given us gold fever. But for everyday wear simply work in a hint of warm, sparkly hues to get that candlelit glow.

ROMINA MCGUINNESS
Metro World News

The show-stopping gold make-up looks spotted on the SS 14 runway were beautiful, but they only work on the runway. You don't want to dazzle your colleagues with all your bling or crack a tooth on the glitter that's landed in your granola.

"Gold makeup is incredibly flattering and works with all skin tones — pretty much everyone can suit a chocolatey bronze. It's like adding sunlight to your face," makeup artist Florrie White, who's worked with the likes of Blake Lively and Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, tells us.

She shows us how to play with the trend:

Highlight Your Face

"A gold highlighter (try the Smashbox Halo Highlighting Wand in Gold or NARS multi-stick in Malibu) will give you that candle light luminosity. Focus on the inner corner of the eyes (to open them up and take away tiredness) and on the temples. Dab some right down to the apple of your cheek so that when you move you get a fuzzy glow around you. Highlight the bridge of the nose for an extra spot of light and your cupid bow to create a fuller top lip."

Warm Your Eyes

"Go for a blown out, gold-bronze smoky eye by using a chocolate gold liner under the eye (try Charlotte Tilbury's eye powder pencil in Sophia). Really bring out the lash line by blending it down. Next, take a gold eye shadow, such as L'Oreal Color Infallible in Goldmine, and wash it all over the lid. Really blend it out so that you get a warm glow behind the lashes. Enhance the look by adding a little bit of a darker eye shadow (such as Color Infallible in Sahara) in the eye sockets."

As for the rest...

- Frame the eyes by slightly grooming and filling in your eyebrows.
- Apply a glittery beige-nude on your lips. Besame Cosmetic's lipstick in Champagne works well.
- Make sure your mascara is combed through and that you don't get powder or cream stuck on the lashes, as this will take away from your lash line.
- Add some gold flecks to your face with NARS's Orgasm Blush.

And for a little extra sparkle we loved:

Dior does gold best with eyes that make accessories unnecessary.
GETTY IMAGES

NARS
Eye paint in Iskandar
narscosmetics.com

Topshop
Glitter eyes in Sprinkles
topshop.com

Shiseido
Luminous satin eye colour trio in Into The Woods
shiseido.com

Besame Cosmetic
Lipstick in Champagne
besame cosmetics.com

Charlotte Tilbury
Eye powder pencil in Sophia
charlottetilbury.com

Barry M
Glitter nail paint in Gold Majesty
barrym.com

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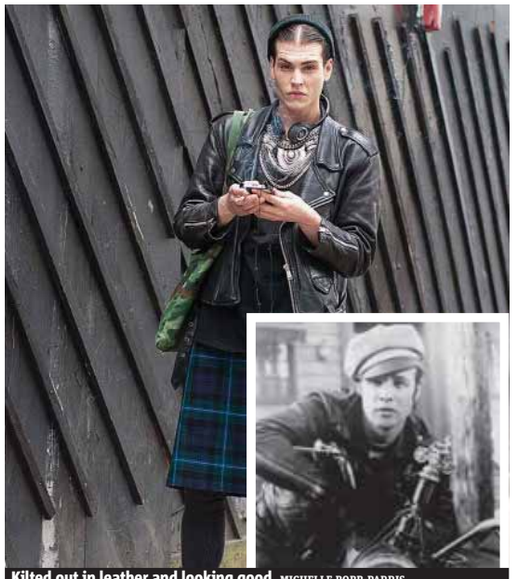
Get revved up for fall with a moto jacket

Men are going all Hells Angels for autumn. Metro rounds up the best of the biker jackets.

RICHARD PECKETT
Metro World News



Kilted out in leather and looking good. MICHELLE BOBB-PARRIS
Inset: Get Marlon Brando's classic biker look. CONTRIBUTED

Buying a leather jacket is like a rite of passage for men. Whether you're a grungy teen, hipster twenty-something or, God forbid, a middle-aged man on the brink of a breakdown, you will hanker after your own piece of primal cowhide. Motorcycle jackets signal full throttle raw masculinity, with every male icon from Marlon Brando and Steve McQueen to David Beckham (now, the new face of British heritage label Belstaff) zipped up in the trend. Now, it's time for the everyman to put his biker style pedal to the metal.

Saint Laurent

Classic biker jacket, $5,036, farfetch.com

Topman

Leather biker jacket, $300, topman.com

Schott

The perfect motorcycle jacket, $990, mrporter.com

Acne

Cassidy leather sleeve biker jacket, $1,240, matchesfashion.com

Plus-size shoppers outweigh fashion options

When it comes to women's clothing sizes, there's some funny math going on.

The average American woman is about 25 pounds heavier than she was in 1960. Yet women's plus-size clothing, generally defined as size 14 and up, still makes up only about nine per cent of the $190 billion spent annually on clothes.

What's wrong with this equation? It's not that plus-size women aren't into fashion. Rather, the fashion industry doesn't seem interested in them.

The fashion industry has long spent more time, money and marketing on clothing for taut bodies than for curvier ones because it's easier and more profitable to do so. But retail analysts and plus-size women say there's something else at play: Stereotypes about larger women not wanting to dress fashionably keep companies from making clothes that are flattering to them. And in turn, that discourages them from spending more.

"There is still an interesting stigma attached to plus-size fashion and the woman who wears it," says Marie Denee, who wears a size 16 and studies the industry via her website TheCurvyFashionista.com. "Many think, 'Oh, she doesn't want to draw attention, live life, date, be confident, wear fitted clothes with bold colours and patterns,' when the exact opposite is true."

Carmen Barrington, 32, says that attitude has resulted in fewer plus-size options. Barrington, who wears around a size 22, lamented recently after a day of shopping at Forever 21, Lane Bryant and other stores that she sometimes can't even find decent plus-size clothing at retailers that specialize in it.

"It was a hot, annoying day, and I spent it trying on stuff, and came up with nothing," Barrington, who works in human resources, says. "There's this aversion to being associated with plus-size clothes."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ValueVillage

Check out **valuevillage.com** for even more great ideas plus DIY costume how-tos!

#thriftortreat

Twitter

JEANNE SPACE
Jeanne Beker
life@metronews.ca

TWITTER HAS BECOME A COOL AND SUCCINCT WAY OF COMMUNICATING. IT ALLOWS ME TO BE ACCESSIBLE, INSTANTLY SPEAK MY MIND AND CONNECTS ME WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE. WHETHER IT'S A FASHION QUESTION OR YOU JUST WANT TO COMMENT ON LIFE'S BIGGER PICTURE, I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Shoe heaven! @TrendMarketing1 checking out the fab spring shoes that will be available @TownShoes next year. #Yummy

Splashes of colour+funky floral prints give spring an edge @Pink_Tartan #wmcfw

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Vancouver

Leeor Wild

Producer and music supervisor

What she's wearing
Hat and Bag from Zara, dress from Aritzia, boots from Vince Camuto.

Her inspiration
Leeor stood out with her simplistic approach to style. She likes wearing hats partly inspired by Boy George.

THE KIT IS A MULTI-PLATFORM BEAUTY AND FASHION BRAND WHICH INCLUDES AN INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE AND DYNAMIC APP, A WEBSITE, KIT CHAT — AN E-NEWSLETTER PROGRAM — AND A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER SECTION TOO!

Madame mode. Femininity rules as ladylike looks kick off Toronto Fashion Week

The runway was reserved for the ladies during the first full day of spring-summer 2014 collections at Toronto's World MasterCard Fashion Week.

Festivities got underway beneath the towering tents of David Pecaut Square on Monday with designers showcasing their visions of warmer weather style with a series of ultra-feminine creations.

The trio of labels, whose presented collections were recognized away from the runway earlier in the day, each netted nominations for the inaugural Canadian Arts & Fashion Awards slated to take place early next year.

David Dixon was recognized in the outstanding achievement category, while Kimberley Newport-Mimran was nominated for designer of the year honours in womenswear for her label, Pink Tartan. Chloe and Parris Gordon of Beaufille were recognized in the emerging talent category.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trends Report

- Need some inspiration for a Halloween costume idea this year? Go online to Trends Report to see the top five celebrity-inspired Halloween make-up tutorials on YouTube, according to Google.

metronews.ca/voices/trends-report

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Have your jack-o'-lantern and eat it too — in a creamy Pumpkin Soup

ROSE REISMAN
For more, visit rosereisman.com or follow her on twitter @rosereisman

This fall, enjoy the abundance of pumpkins that are virtually found everywhere!

Pumpkins are rich in carotenoids, recognized to keep your immune system healthy and strong.

If you would like to try using fresh pumpkin instead of canned, just roast a small pumpkin at 400 F until tender, about 45 minutes. Cut open, scrape away seeds and scoop out pulp and mash.

Ingredients

- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cups chopped onions
- 1 1/2 cups chopped carrots
- 1 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 1 tsp minced ginger
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1-1/2 cups canned pumpkin purée
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ginger
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp hot sauce
- 1 cup light coconut milk
- 1-1/2 tbsp honey

Garnish

- 1/4 cup low fat sour cream

1. In saucepan sprayed with cooking spray, heat oil over medium-high heat; cook onions, carrots, garlic and ginger for 10 minutes, stirring frequently, or until onions are softened and browned. Stir in stock, pumpkin, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and hot sauce. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 30 minutes or until carrot is tender.

2. In batches, purée soup in a blender. Return soup to saucepan. Stir in coconut milk and honey. Gently reheat.

3. Divide among soup bowls.

Pumpkin and Light Coconut Milk Soup

This recipe serves four and contains 172 calories per serving. ROSE REISMAN

4. Garnish: Place sour cream in a small plastic baggie. Snip off the end corner of the bag. Carefully draw approximately 3 to 4 circles on top of the soup as in photo. Use a toothpick to drag lines from the centre out toward the edges to create a web design.

For your phone

Foodie Halloween Treats (iPad/ iPhone; free)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

There's spooky treats for all in this fun collection of 40 Foodie Halloween recipes spanning drinks, cakes, cookies and candies. Enjoy chocolate frogs, spice-roasted pumpkin seeds, and caramel apple cider cocktails.

GIRL GUIDE COOKIES... A SWEET FUNDRAISER

For decades, Girl Guide cookies have been a fundraising success story for units throughout Canada. They provide funds that are essential to sustaining and building Guiding, while supporting program resources for girls in their units, Guider training, camps, events, travel and so much more. Selling cookies also helps girls develop some great public relations skills and gain self-confidence and personal empowerment in the process.

Girl Guides of Canada Guides du Canada

METRO CUSTOM PUBLISHING

COOKIES GOT ME TO ENGLAND!

A PATHFINDER'S FUNDRAISING STORY

Kristen Johnson, a 13 year-old member of the 84th Pickering Pathfinders, knows very well the value of fundraising for trips with Girl Guide cookies. "Last year my Pathfinder leader asked if I wanted to join the group that was going to England," she said. "My best friend was going and I really wanted to go, too, but the trip was expensive. The only way I would be able to go was if I fundraised. So, I asked for lots and lots of cookies cases, and got selling. With my unit, I sold door-to-door, in grocery and department stores and at the local shopping mall, for many weekends."

By the time she was done selling cookies, Kristen had considerably reduced the cost of her trip. "I felt proud and grateful to have raised this money," she said. "I would never have had this chance if not for my Pathfinder leader, who encouraged all of us to sell Girl Guide cookies!"

YOU WANT COOKIES? WE'VE GOT COOKIES!!

GIRL GUIDE MEMBERS WILL BE SELLING COOKIES AT SELECT TTC STATIONS ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24 FROM 4-7PM AND SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 10 AM – 5 PM. SEE BELOW FOR A LIST OF LOCATIONS.

TTC COOKIE DAYS

Thursday, 4-7pm

Bathurst	Don Mills	Eglinton	Keele	North York	Spadina	York Mills
Bloor	Donlands	Finch	King	Pape	St. Clair W.	
Broadview	Downsview	Greenwood	Kipling	Queen	St. George	
Chester	Dufferin	Islington	Lawrence	Royal York	Victoria Park	
Coxwell	Dundas W.	Jane	Main St.	Sheppard	Woodbine	

Saturday, 10am-2pm
Queen Wilson

Saturday, 2pm-5pm
Scarborough

Saturday, 10am-5pm

Bloor	Downsview	Finch	Runnymede
Broadview	Dundas W.	Royal York	

Muffins made of sugar and spice and everything fall

Pumpkin Spice Muffins

This recipe makes six muffins. DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA

1. Preheat oven to 375 F (190 C). Butter a 6-cup nonstick muffin pan.

2. In a small bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, allspice, baking soda and salt; set aside.

3. In a large bowl, with an electric mixer, beat butter, granulated sugar and brown sugar, until light and fluffy. Beat in egg, until incorporated. Stir in buttermilk, pumpkin purée and oil. Stir in flour mixture; mixing until just incorporated.

4. Spoon into prepared pan. Bake for about 25 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly pressed. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes. Transfer to rack to cool completely.

5. Cream Cheese Frosting: In a medium bowl, with an electric mixer, beat cream cheese and butter until smooth. Add sugar gradually, beating well after each addition. Add cinnamon and vanilla; beat until fluffy. Frost cooled muffins.

DAIRY FAMERS OF CANADA

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups (300 ml) all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp (7 ml) baking powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) each, ground cinnamon and cloves
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) each, ground nutmeg, ginger and all-spice
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) each, baking soda and salt
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) butter, softened
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) sugar
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) brown sugar
- 1 egg, room temperature
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) buttermilk
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) pumpkin purée
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) vegetable oil

Cream Cheese Frosting

- 4 oz (125 g) Canadian cream cheese, softened
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) icing sugar
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp vanilla

Pumpkin Honey Doughnuts

1. In bowl, stir yeast, flour, salt and pumpkin pie spice. Stir in water, pumpkin and egg until a thick, smooth batter forms. Cover with plastic wrap and allow to rest for 45 minutes.

2. In saucepan over medium heat, combine the honey, sugar, lemon juice and cinnamon. Bring to a boil and stir well. Remove from the heat.

3. In a large, deep skillet over medium-high, heat 1 inch of oil to 375 F.

4. Working in batches, carefully drop the batter by the tablespoonful into the hot oil. A cookie scoop makes this easier.

5. Turning occasionally, fry doughnuts until deep golden brown all over and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the fried doughnuts to a large bowl. Drizzle the honey syrup over the doughnuts and toss to coat. Repeat with remaining doughnuts. Serve. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 2 tsp instant yeast
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 15-oz can pumpkin purée (not pumpkin pie filling)
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Vegetable oil, for frying

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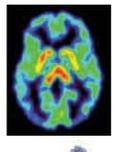

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MOBILE SOLUTIONS DELIVER BENEFITS

Investing in mobile technologies can pay big dividends, particularly when the technologies address particular business challenges. Careful research and analysis is the key to success — to get the biggest returns, a company must start with a clear picture of its current operations and be able to identify how mobile access to data can contribute to profitability.

According to several studies, small- to medium-sized enterprises are most likely to benefit from mobile technologies in three ways:

- Employees can work from remote locations;
- Ability to network with both new and prospective clients; and
- Rapid, accurate analysis of centrally stored data — some of which originates in remote locations.

Bell Mobility's solution delivered all three benefits to Sure Track Courier. Up until a few years ago, the company relied on a combination of two-way radios, cellphones and pagers to connect dispatchers and drivers. The new system incorporates fleet-tracking software, GPS, and hands-free push-to-talk service. The system also generates accurate up-to-the-minute reports, reducing headaches for both drivers and dispatchers.

"In our business, time is money," says Victor Pereira, sales and operations manager at Sure Track Courier. "And it's easy to waste time through communications. Now we can send only relevant information and make sure it arrives just as it's needed. Drivers can concentrate more on driving and get instant help in avoiding traffic jams and finding the best routes."

THE BELL ADVANTAGE

Bell business experts provided a unique set of wireless solutions that addressed Sure Track's business challenges. In addition to wireless expertise, the courier company benefited from the following Bell advantages:

- Canada's largest LTE network;
- Canada's trusted push-to-talk service;
- Global coverage in more than 200 countries;
- Dedicated small business specialist – 24/7 live technical support.

ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

According to Pereira, the key to success has been creating a user interface that meets the specific requirements of the company's drivers and dispatchers. Sure Track representatives worked directly with Bell and Bell's technology partner to create a navigation system that prompts users to enter information in a logical order and with a minimum of touches. The system transmits the meaningful, accurate reports that Sure Track needs to plan and manage its business effectively.

"We know everything from where our vehicles are to the temperature inside of our trailers — which can be extremely important, depending on what's inside," Pereira says.

TECHNOLOGIES TAILORED FOR YOUR BUSINESS

STOCKLITE/SHUTTERSTOCK

More businesses are adopting mobile technologies and using them to increase profitability and improve customer service. With a large influx of mobile technologies in the marketplace, the challenge facing many small- to medium-sized enterprises is determining which technologies are best suited to their business.

"We had tried various systems, but they weren't really working that well for us," says Victor Pereira, sales and operations manager at Sure Track Courier. "We worked with Bell Mobility to create a complete system that meets all of our business needs."

Sure Track is a Toronto-based courier company providing delivery, freight and warehousing services in Canada. The company needed a reliable way to track both vehicles and shipments in real time, and to analyze data about everything from the costs of fuel and tolls to vehicle wear and tear. Bell Mobility delivered a customized solution that incorporates GPS technology and simultaneously manages dispatch, billing and warehousing information. As a result, Sure Track spends less on fuel and tolls, and can provide customers with accurate, timely pick-up and delivery information.

"About a month ago, an airline contacted us because it had a plane on a runway in Kentucky that needed a part from a manufacturer in Toronto," Pereira says.

"The new mobile solution enabled us to dispatch the closest vehicle and track the delivery right to the tarmac. That made Sure Track look good to our client — the airline company — because they knew exactly how long their plane would be out of service and could plan accordingly."

Why more small businesses switch to Bell:

The Network

Bell gives you access to Canada's largest LTE network[1] so you'll get blazing fast speeds wherever you go. You can work more effectively on the go with unlimited access to the largest Wi–Fi network across Canada. And you'll enjoy the fewest dropped calls on Canada's most reliable national voice network.[2]

The Support

At Bell, you get a dedicated small business specialist who will recommend the right devices, plans, and mobile applications to help your business do more and make more.

The Savings

Take advantage of exclusive discounts with the Bell Business Advantage program. Your business can save up to $5,000 a year on everyday essentials like fuel, couriers, and office supplies when you sign up for a business service from Bell.[3]

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Current as of October 21, 2013. Available within network coverage areas available from Bell Mobility; see bell.ca/coverage. Subject to change without notice. Other conditions apply. **(1)** With compatible devices based on total square kms of coverage on the shared LTE network available from Bell vs. Rogers' LTE network. See bell.ca/LTE for details. **(2)** Based on testing against other national voice networks comparing national totals of 1) dropped calls over successful call connections and 2) completed calls over attempted calls. **(3)** Available with continued subscription to an eligible Bell Mobility service and an eligible Bell phone or Internet or website service. Total savings may vary by Partner, products and length of term. Program subject to change without notice. For additional terms and conditions; see advantage.bell.ca/terms/. **(4)** Offer ends October 31, 2013. With new small business activation (Mobile Internet activations excluded). Subject to change; not combinable with other offers. Credit applied on the account before taxes; allow 4 to 6 weeks.

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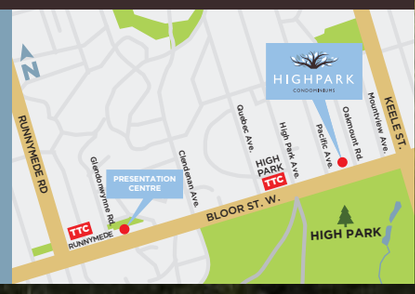

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If Zsa Zsa Gabor decorated condos...

Design. In the world of Esther Extraordinaire, everything's over the top

CONDO TRENDS
Duncan McAllister
life@metronews.ca

You want dazzle? She'll give you dazzle. Esther Tracy displays swatches and some of her designs at a recent talk. DUNCAN MCALLISTER/FOR METRO

It's not Vegas enough! That's the cri de coeur from Esther Tracy, host of HGTV's Esther Extraordinaire. It's all about glitz, glam and glitter. Tracy, a native of Ireland, is a colourful personality. "I'm sort of over the top, larger than life," she says. Think Zsa Zsa Gabor meets Dolly Parton.

Recently, at a well-attended design seminar at the site of the Royal LePage West Realty Group, home of The Condo Mall, participants were treated to fine hors d'oeuvres and cocktails while Esther — with her long-suffering son and project manager David Tracy — demonstrated the art of dazzle.

"I love everything shimmery and shiny and I think condos, especially sometimes when we're living in very small spaces, need reflective furnishings and furnishings that visibly don't appear to take up a lot of space. I use a lot of glass, a lot of mirror, a lot of mirrored pieces of furniture, shiny metals, all of which contributes to the overall spacious feel."

Tracy proceeded to show makeovers of some small spaces that she's done. "People want colours, they want sparkle and they want comfort and they want elegance, but they also want pieces that have some presence," she notes. Tracy says these things are all attainable, whether the space is 500 or 5,000 square feet.

According to Tracy, the rule for small spaces is to use larger furnishings and objects — the smaller the space, the larger the item. So use fewer pieces, but pick ones that have presence and are multifunctional. "You may have a 500-square-foot condo but you are not going to put small items in there. Today, the trend is to unclutter everything and have some space within your space."

"Too much is never too much" is the motto of her show, which can be seen Saturdays at 3 p.m. on HGTV. Not for the faint of heart, Esther's designs and her flamboyant style pushes the boundaries of her clients' comfort zone.

The talk was one of the first in a series of ongoing condo seminars presented by The Condo Mall, a new concept that aims to redefine condo shopping for consumers.

The new venture, located at Avenue Road and Eglinton Avenue, showcases several of Toronto's top condominium developments under one roof in a 15,000-square-foot retail space. Founding partners Adam Sax and Peter Riccio say that the Condo Mall is a first in North America.

Shine on

"I love everything shimmery and shiny and I think condos ... need reflective furnishings and furnishings that visibly don't appear to take up a lot of space."

Esther Tracy, host of HGTV's Esther Extraordinaire

Legal Matters

Paying capital gains tax on an investment property

Question: I'm purchasing a nice condo downtown as an investment property. My wife and I are looking to downsize in a few years and may consider moving into the new condo once our kids are out of the house. I've been told the condo is subject to capital gains on the increase in its value. Is this applicable if we take up residence at the condo in the future?

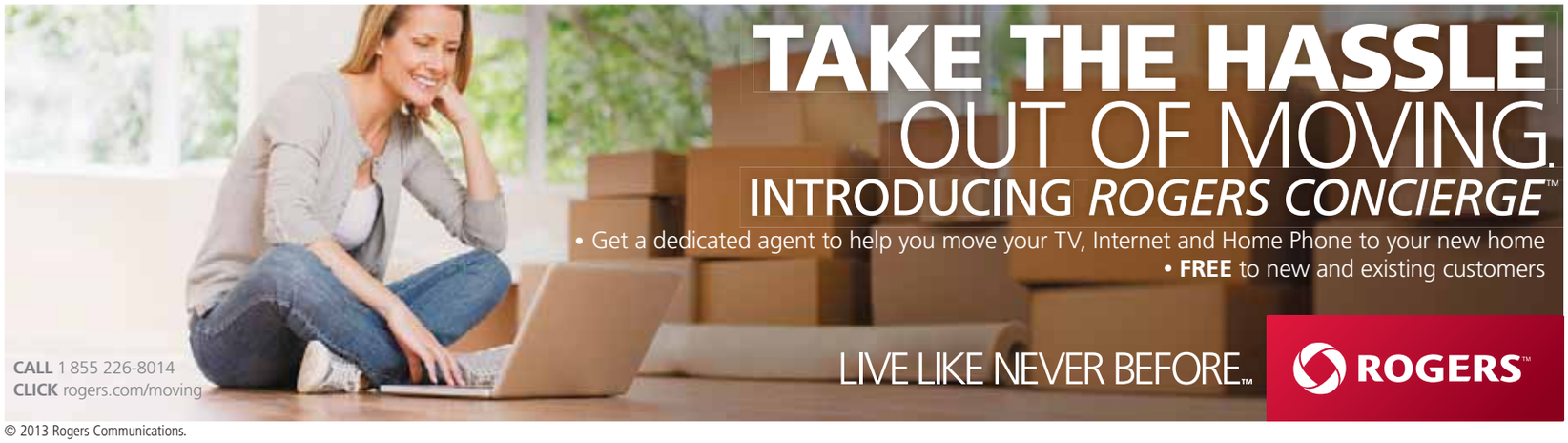
LEGAL MATTERS
Jeffrey Cowan
home@metronews.ca

The condo is going to be characterized by the tax man as an investment property because you and your spouse still have a primary residence. Couples can only claim one property as their principal residence, which is then free from capital-gains tax.

The increase in the value of the condo from when you purchase it to the date that you occupy it as your primary residence is taxable as a capital gain because it is not your primary residence. Once you occupy the residence, there are no further taxable capital gains.

You should have the value of the condo assessed when you move there, so you can justify to the tax authorities that you've paid the appropriate tax on your investment property. Please consult a tax adviser about this attribution.

Follow Jeff Cowan on Twitter @Cowan_Law or on the website at cowanlaw.ca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Another piece of Regent Park's rebirth

A view of the outdoor terrace at One Park Place North Tower. CONTRIBUTED

Meet the condo

- **What.** One Park Place North Tower
- **Location.** Dundas Street East and Sumach Street
- **Builder.** The Daniels Corporation
- **Architect.** Hariri Pontarini Architects
- **Sizes.** From 582 to 729 square feet
- **Pricing.** From the low $300,000s
- **Building.** 25 storeys above a five-storey podium
- **Suites.** One bedroom and one bedroom plus den
- **Website.** danielsoneparkplace.com

The project overview

One Park Place North Tower is the fourth condominium residence in the award-winning Regent Park revitalization. The building will feature ground-level retail and a pedestrian square. The condominium is well under construction, with move-ins planned for January 2014.

Location and transit

Situated alongside Daniels Spectrum and the Paintbox Bistro, there's TTC access right on Dundas Street East. The building is close to Cabbagetown, the Distillery District and the St. Lawrence Market. Commuters have the Don Valley Parkway nearby.

In the neighbourhood

Situated in the heart of Regent Park with direct access to the Urban Mews, a community gathering spot that connects residents to many of the local amenities. Nearby is the Aquatic Centre, a six-acre park, and several retailers.

Building amenities

Residents will have access to over 45,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor amenities at Club Uno, including two squash courts, a fitness studio, and a yoga and Pilates studio. There's a party room, an outdoor terrace with barbecues and gardening plots.

Provincial review

A look at Ontario's planning system

BRYAN TUCKEY
President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) can be found at twitter.com/bildgta, facebook.com/bildgta, and bildblogs.ca.

Earlier this year, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Linda Jeffrey announced she would be launching a broad consultation to review aspects of the provincial planning system.

BILD will join the OHBA at the table representing the industry and new home buyers, which is important because it gives us an opportunity to further our efforts in improving new home affordability in the GTA. As I've mentioned in earlier columns, affordability continues to pose significant challenges to the industry, new homebuyers and every resident of this region.

The consultations, which are scheduled to begin shortly, will be split up into two discussions. One will focus on Ontario's land-use planning system and decision-making process while the other will revolve around the financial components of the development process.

I'm going to follow suit and divide this discussion into two parts as well. Today I will discuss issues surrounding our planning system, which focuses heavily on the Ontario Municipal Board, commonly referred to as the OMB.

BILD continues to support the essential role the OMB plays in the development approval process as it provides an impartial, adjudicating tribunal that is removed from local political pressures and renders decisions in the public interest and in accordance with the Planning Act.

This is essential to ensure any municipality, community, ratepayer association or non-profit agency, along with the landowner, has an opportunity to present and test the merits of an application.

It's important to point out that many OMB decisions have resulted in celebrated projects across the GTA. A good example would be the city-led initiative called The Kings.

This development was appealed to the OMB and, because the King-Parliament and King-Spadina Secondary Plans and Zoning Bylaws were seen to be good, sound planning, the plans have been guiding the development of the thriving St. Lawrence-Corktown neighbourhood in the east and the Entertainment-Fashion districts to the west.

What's hot on the condo market

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CALL 647-350-2221 OR VISIT 2221YONGE.COM

2. Queen West

Open House: Authentic downtown loft on Queen Street West. One bedroom, two baths. Visit 993 Queen St. W., on Oct. 24 from 12 to 2 p.m. and Oct. 25 from 4 to 6 p.m.
CALL 416-368-5262 FOR INFO

3. Downtown

The Property Show: Real estate and investment event. Oct. 26 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Toronto Sheraton Centre hotel, 123 Queen St. W.
EMAIL INFO@THEPROPERTYSHOW.CA OR VISIT THEPROPERTYSHOW.CA TO PURCHASE TICKETS

4. Downtown

Open House: Townhouse in Kensington-Chinatown neighbourhood. Two bedrooms, two baths. Head on over to 68 Carr St., on Oct. 26 and 27 from 2 to 4 p.m.
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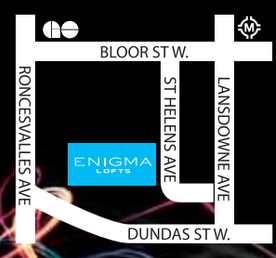

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Upping the comfort quotient

Homebody hedonism.
As cooler weather closes in, creating a quiet nook all for yourself provides some at-home escapism

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Whether on a quiet Saturday morning or early mid-week evening, we all have times when we crave some space to ourselves — and many of us have a special nook in our home that allows us to get away.

For some, that space is found in the corner of a comfy sofa or by lying in bed to read. For others, it's getting away from roommates and family by socializing on the computer.

Creating a quiet spot all your own doesn't take up much space; it's about surrounding yourself with comforts you enjoy.

A favourite chair can be styled with a back-support pillow, decorative throw or a small side table.

In the bedroom, add some support pillows for reading, and a laptop or portable television for watching movies. Grab a pair of earphones so you can selfishly listen to your own movie or music, thereby helping to create a world all your own. At your desk, make sure you have a spot for your favourite coffee cup, a relaxing scented candle and some family or vacation photos to offer up visual breaks from the computer screen.

Great comfort and support for studying, reading or while watching television in bed. Microsuede Backrest, $25, bedbathandbeyond.ca.

From office to bedroom to living room, an extra side table can be used to hold a book, coffee or decorative candles. Lawson Side Table, $174, homesav.com.

Keep your favourite cup of java warm while reading in bed, soaking in the bath or socializing online. Place one in every comfort nook around your house. Salton Mug Warmer, $10, Walmart. Check walmart.ca for store availability.

Stylish, sleek and reminiscent of a first-class lounge seat, this chair won't get in anyone's way. Benson Motion Recliner, $1,800, urbanbarn.com.

This anywhere lamp casts the perfect spotlight for reading in bed, the office or the living room. Graham Table Lamp, $322, crateandbarrel.com.

Place your single-serve brewer close at hand, and you can have Tim Hortons coffee without even getting up from the lounger. Tim Hortons Single Serve Coffee Cups, $9 per pack of 14, timhortons.ca.

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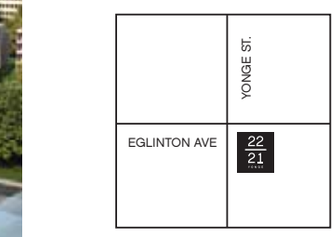

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Pest control

Halloween candy works a treat on pesky mice

CHARLES THE BUTLER
askcharlesthebutler@metronews.ca
For more, visit charlesmacpherson.com

I live in an older home in Halifax and often have mice in the fall season. How do I get rid of them? Thanks, Mr. Butler!
— Kathy

As many people know, mice become more common indoors in the fall because they want to come in from the cold.

Well, as one caller from Nova Scotia suggested on a recent radio show, you could buy a white mouse and let that loose in your home — then when the outdoor mice encounter it, they'll think they've seen a ghost and run away. Alright, that's a terrible joke (and trust me, it's not the way to get rid of mice) but as it happens, there's another Halloween-related theme that comes in handy when dealing with the pesky rodents.

When I was a working butler, we had mouse problems at my employers' home in the country. I was taught the following trick, and it really works:

• Get a large glass jar such as an empty pickle jar.
• Fill the base of the jar with at most one cup of corn syrup, as well as a few pieces of broken chocolate (possibly from your Halloween candy pile) and half a handful of peanuts.
• Put the jar in the area where you have mice, then take a yard stick and lean it so it's resting on the open neck of the jar and the floor.

The mice will smell the concoction of sweets and nuts, walk up the yardstick and fall into the jar. They'll be unable to get out as long as you pick a large enough jar.

Now, I know there are many chemical solutions for getting rid of mice, but let me tell you, this good old-fashioned method works like a charm every time, and after you catch a few the mouse problem is all gone. Good luck, Kathy, and do let us know how it goes.

Sure, he's cute. But if you don't want him in your home all winter, take Charles' advice. ISTOCK

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Rocking a fall design trend

Decor. Natural elements including stones and minerals are popping up in decorative items

Along with grainy woods, metallics and other textural elements, rock and mineral-themed decor is part of a fall trend toward nature and natural elements.

In many cases, real rocks and minerals are integrated into the decorative items.

Los Angeles interior and product designer Hillary Thomas says she responds to the divergent qualities of primitiveness and sophistication in rocks and minerals.

"I find that using pieces like petrified wood and malachite helps a space look more collected and layered," she says.

And the range of colours — the bright agates, the neutrals — is fun to play with. "You can be colour-shy and still tie a room together or make a big statement with a finial," she says.

Thomas creates lamp finials out of slivers of malachite, howlite and agate, as well as unusual specimens like inky iridescent labradorite, creamy blue-tinged chrysophase and petrified wood. The colours range from intense purple, turquoise and cranberry to light sunny yellow, snowy white and a range of striated hues. See hillarythomas.com for more.

Besides aesthetics, some stones have been endowed by various cultures with special properties. The Chinese view jade as a protective stone, and it features prominently in feng shui, the ancient art of harmonizing individuals with their environment.

"I have a client who keeps a pyramid of lapis lazuli under her bed to ward off bad vibrations," says Toronto-based mineral and bead dealer David McDonald.

Examples of Brazilian agate and onyx cut into bookends can be found at therockshed.com. Some have the crystalline characteristics of geodes, while others come in vibrant pink, teal and red hues.

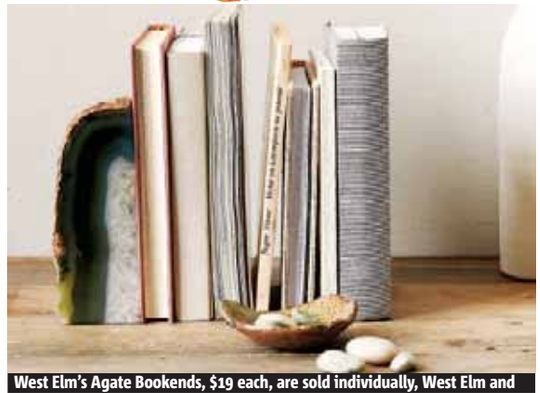
Table lamps are an easy way to add a touch of stone. Arteriors' Sydney and Herst marble lamps, both at Horchow, horchow.com, have honed and softly buffed marble bases that develop a dreamy translucence when lit.

Eduardo Garza's agate-inlaid jewelry boxes are part of West Elm's fall collection, and are available at westelm.com. Swirls of natural graphic design make a group of agate ornaments intriguing for the holiday tree, or just to hang on cupboards or window latches.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RabLabs' Cielo lamp has a pillar of amethyst crystals topped with a pretty shade. JOHN MUGGENBORG/MUGGPHOTO.COM/RABLABS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RabLabs' Cele clocks encase small alarm clocks in agate. JOHN MUGGENBORG/MUGGPHOTO.COM/RABLABS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



West Elm's Agate Bookends, $19 each, are sold individually, West Elm and westelm.com. COURTESY WEST ELM

Eduardo Garza Agate Inlay Boxes range from $49-$69, West Elm and westelm.com. COURTESY WEST ELM

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Homemade Halloween

Style gurus Steven Sabados and Chris Hyndman are getting ready for Halloween and shared these easy, cost-effective DIY projects to help you get into the seasonal spirit. For more Halloween tips, watch Steven and Chris weekdays at 2 p.m. on CBC.

ALL PHOTOS AND TEXT PROVIDED BY STEVEN AND CHRIS

Topsy-turvy pumpkin tower

Make pumpkins the focal point of your outdoor Halloween decor with a topsy-turvy pumpkin tower. These no-carve creations are quick to assemble and can also be displayed as topiaries for a fun take on a formal front entryway.

- Cinderella or other unique pumpkins
- Marker
- Shish kebab skewers
- Wood carving U-gouge tool

Method:
1. Choose unique-looking pumpkins or gourds for this project, like the Cinderella variety.
2. Draw designs on the pumpkins with a marker.
3. Stack gourds one on top of the other to get a sense of how they will come together in the end.
4. Lightly carve the design into the face of each pumpkin, just beneath the skin's surface, using the U-gouge. Note: The U-shaped base is attached to a large blade, so be extremely careful when working with it.
5. Once you have carved your full design into the pumpkins, stack once again and secure together using the skewers.

Homemade witch's broomstick

A homemade witch's broomstick can be a subtly spooky decor addition to your front porch or it can lend a little touch of authenticity to a kid's costume. Here's how you can make this iconic Halloween accessory at home.

- A collection of sticks
- A large branch or broomstick
- String

Method:
1. Collect sticks and a large branch from your backyard or nearby park.
2. Break the sticks into equal lengths.
3. Tie sticks into small bundles using string.
4. Attach the bundles to the bottom of the branch or a broomstick, two at a time.
5. Repeat until all your bundles are attached.

Tastefully spooky ladyfingers

There's nothing like bringing the theme of Halloween to unexpected places such as the dessert tray. These scary snacks are easily prepared and are a fun way to be tastefully creepy.

- Store-bought ladyfingers
- Store-bought icing
- Almonds
- Platter

Method:
1. Lay out store-bought ladyfingers on a platter.
2. Use store-bought icing to adhere almonds to the ends of the cookies to resemble spooky fingers.
3. For extra spookiness, use red store bought icing to adhere the almonds.

Nosey jack-o'-lantern

Put a new spin on your jack-o'-lantern this Halloween by literally turning your pumpkin on its side. Try this easy DIY this Halloween — no special tools needed.

- Pumpkin
- Pumpkin carver
- Flameless candle

Method:
1. Turn your pumpkin on its side so the stem faces you.
2. Use the stem as the nose of your jack-o'-lantern design.
3. Carve pumpkin and hollow it out.
4. Place a flameless candle in the jack-o'-lantern.

Halloween meringue bones

Create a creepy culinary crime scene that's devilishly delicious with these simple ingredients. These light and airy confections can be creatively displayed to spook your Halloween guests.

- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 5 egg whites
- Pinch of cream of tartar
- 1 tsp almond, vanilla, orange or lemon extract

Method:
1. Preheat oven to 220 F. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. Prepare a pastry bag with a round No. 10 tip (about 3/8-inch diameter).
2. Combine sugar and salt in small bowl. Beat egg whites and cream of tartar in small bowl with electric mixer at low speed until soft peaks form.
3. Gradually add sugar mixture, beating constantly. Beat until stiff peaks form and meringue is shiny and smooth. Add extract; beat just until blended.
4. Fill pastry bag with meringue. Pipe a log three to four inches long. Pipe two balls on both ends of each log. Smooth any peaks with wet finger. Repeat with remaining meringue.
5. Bake 30 minutes; turn off heat. Leave cookies in oven overnight; do not open oven door. Makes about two dozen cookies.

Tip: To give the bones an ivory or aged look, add one to two drops yellow food colouring with the extract. If you want to get even creepier, serve these meringue bones with a side jar of strawberry jam.

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Grasscloth has a glam comeback

Resurgence. There's been a wallpaper boom in the last decade, and now grass coverings are coming back 'big time'

The designs and styles of the past have been popping up in everything from music to fashion, and recently interior design has seen a resurgence in the use of wallpaper.

Throughout the 1960s and '70s wallpaper was used to cover entire rooms, but as with many trends people grew tired of it and adopted solid coloured walls.

"Over the last eight or nine years, I've slowly seen a wallpaper resurrection," said Ivan Meade, principal designer at Victoria's Meade Design Group.

"People have started decorating in a more traditional way, including window treatments, wallpaper and different upholsteries. The design esthetic is becoming richer again and is part of the design process."

While wallpaper may be an influence from the past, Meade said it is being used in contemporary applications and the materials with which it's made have been updated.

Unlike traditional wallpaper, current patterns are available in vinyl so that they can be used in bathrooms and kitchens to minimize the risk of mould growth and peeling due to steam.

"Grass wallpaper is also coming back big time and that was popular in the '70s, but the designs and materials now are different," said Meade.

Instead of wallpapering an entire room as was seen in the past, Meade said wallpaper in smaller areas is a great way to create visual interest or an accent wall.

He said nearly all of his current designs incorporate some wallpaper.

"I like to put wallpaper behind bookcases and on the faces of stairs that gives some visual interest," he explained. "We have also used it for a kitchen backsplash and put glass in front of it to protect it."

Even though wallpaper is being used in new bold ways, Stuart Stark, design director of Victoria's Charles Rupert Designs, has worked to keep historic patterns alive.

Stark started Charles Rupert Designs in the late '80s when he was working on heritage home restoration.

"In 2004, we decided to start our own lines of wallpaper because a lot of the historical lines that many of the established firms had done were being discontinued," said Stark.

"We thought there was still a specialized market there if you were marketing them correctly. Over the years we have been collecting a rather large collection of historic wallpapers."

Despite Charles Rupert Designs' focus on historic wallpapers, Stark said nearly 50 per cent of his clients are purchasing wallpaper for newly built homes or condos.

Many new condos and houses are painted in greys, beiges and whites and, according to Stark, homeowners are looking to wallpaper to add richness and warmth to their homes.

But before homeowners choose wallpaper, both Stark and Meade said there are some important things to consider.

"If you have cats, do not put up a seagrass or grass wallpaper," said Meade. "Cats just love to scratch at it."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Meeeeow

"If you have cats, do not put up a seagrass or grass wallpaper. Cats just love to scratch at it."

Ivan Meade, principal designer, Meade Design Group

Crezana Designs' range of wallcoverings includes high-style takes on grasscloth and other natural materials such as woven straw and burlap. The wallcoverings incorporate embroidery, hand printing and metallic accents such as grommets and nail heads. See crezana.com for more. Above, Crezana's Ikat wallpaper in Azure features embroidery. COURTESY CREZANA DESIGNS

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Crezana Designs' Naziri embroidered grasscloth wallcovering. See crezana.com for more. COURTESY CREZANA DESIGNS

Crezana Designs' Pee Gee embroidered grasscloth wallcovering, left, and its Dolce Vita burlap wallcovering with silver grommets. COURTESY CREZANA DESIGNS

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Demystifying art for the newbie collector

Decorating. An expert offers tips on how to narrow your art search

TINA CHADHA
Metro World News in New York City

Cristina Salmastrelli, director of the Affordable Art Fair in New York, isn't some stodgy art snob (just check out the hysterical "S— People Say At Art Fairs" YouTube video she co-stars in). To help novice collectors finally make their first art world purchases, she offers the following tips.

Do some homework
Before you think about buying art, look through art websites or magazines to see what type of work you're attracted to, says Salmastrelli.

"Do you like oil paintings or photography? Do you like small pieces that you can bunch together? That's something that's really important to know, because art can be overwhelming," she says. "If you figure out the genre you're looking for, that narrows it down." Salmastrelli recommends perusing sites such as artnet.com, artsy.net and blouinartinfo.com.

Size matters
To help narrow down your search, "think about the size you want," says Salmastrelli. "Are you looking for something to go over the couch in the living room or over the bed in the bedroom? Or are you looking for something that's going to hang above a side table?"

Know your budget
"This will help you stay focused when you (walk through a fair or gallery) and not get overwhelmed," says Salmastrelli.

Fall in love
"The most important thing about buying a work of art is that you fall in love with it," says Salmastrelli. "You don't want to buy a piece because the name is hot or someone else has it. And when you see it in your home, it's going to make you smile every time."

Ask questions
Don't be afraid to ask a dealer questions and learn more about a piece. Salmastrelli suggests starting with: "What kind of materials were used? Where is the artist from and where is he or she in their career?"

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Haute horror

Don't spend all your time fussing over your costume — OK, yes, do that too — but you've also got a Halloween party to set up. Get into the spooky theme with dark touches for your home. Here are some non-tacky options to get your heart racing.

TINA CHADHA
Metro World News in New York City

Creepy and elegant — our kind of party. Liba Home Archival Perfect Setting placemat, $22 US for 50, libastyle.com.

We might leave this guy up all year round. Lighted Glitter Crow, $18 US, target.com. Left, stash your pretty scented candles and light one of these. Haunting Nights LED Candles, $128 US, oliveandcocoa.com.

It's all in the details. Kikkerland Skull & Bone ice cube tray, $4.99 US, bedbathandbeyond.com.

NFL

Spiller may get more time to heal

Buffalo Bills coach Doug Marrone is uncertain whether running back C.J. Spiller will play at New Orleans on Sunday.

Marrone on Wednesday says he's considering sitting Spiller to give his sore left ankle time to heal. He added a decision won't be made until later this week.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Young standout Monahan staying with Flames

Sean Monahan will remain with the Calgary Flames this season instead of being returned to his junior club.

"We feel good about the decision we've made," general manager Jay Feaster said in making the announcement. "We believe his development is best served with us."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

World Series

"He hasn't even reached puberty yet. When he gets there, I think he'll be able to grow one."

Boston infielder Mike Napoli, on 21-year-old teammate Xander Bogaerts, who hasn't been so successful in joining the Red Sox's playoff beard trend. Go to metronews.ca for coverage of the scruffy Sox's World Series opener against the St. Louis Cardinals on Wednesday night.

Raptors have a barrel of fun against Grizzlies

NBA. Toronto runs over Memphis as stellar pre-season continues

On Wednesday

Raptors	Grizzlies
108	72

Thirteen different Toronto players scored points, five of them in double figures, as the Raptors pounded the Memphis Grizzlies 108-72 in NBA pre-season play Wednesday.

Toronto took control in the late stages of the opening quarter and led by as many as 39 points on the way to a rout of last season's Western Conference finalists.

With the win the Raptors improved to 6-1 in the pre-season, which ends Friday in Milwaukee.

DeMar DeRozan led the way for the Raptors with 21 points, while Rudy Gay added 15.

Austin Daye had 14 points off the bench as the Raptors shot 46 per cent from the field, including an impressive 53 per cent from three-point range.

The Grizzlies, meanwhile, were brutal at both ends of the court. They shot just 35 per cent from the field, including only 24 per cent from the beyond the arc.

The only concern on the night for the Raptors was the health of starting guard Kyle Lowry, who left the game in the second half with an injured left ring finger and did not return. He had dished out 10 assists in 26 minutes before heading into the locker-room.

Starting centre Jonas Valanciunas left the game with a cut to his chin and also did not return.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Raptors centre Jonas Valanciunas runs over his Memphis counterpart Marc Gasol on Wednesday night at Air Canada Centre. FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFL. Kackert hopes to kick injury bug in return to Argos

Argos running back Chad Kackert is gang-tackled by a trio of Roughriders on July 11. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

It's been a frustrating season for Chad Kackert.

Injuries have forced the speedy running back to miss nine of Toronto's 16 games this year. After sitting out two weeks with a shoulder ailment, Kackert returns Thursday night when the Argonauts (10-6) face the Winnipeg Blue Bombers (3-13) at Rogers Centre.

Kackert has been plagued by knee and shoulder (twice) injuries as well as a concussion this season. But still, the 2012 Grey Cup MVP is trying to put his struggles in proper perspective.

"It's been frustrating but it's been a learning experience," Kackert said. "When you're not playing you have too much time to think and thankfully I got some good advice from some friends back home and have been able to find some peace and make the most out of the circumstance."

Injuries have taken Kackert's big-play potential from Toronto's offence for much of this season. The five-foot-eight, 206-pound Kackert has managed just 60 carries but is averaging a solid 6.7 yards per attempt.

"He's got that explosiveness," Argos quarterback Ricky Ray said of Kackert. "He gets a crease and he's gone for a touchdown." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Count on Clarkson for grit but not goal production

Maple Leafs forward David Clarkson has served his 10-game suspension and is set to make his regular-season debut for Toronto. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Rory Boylen
toronto@metronews.ca

Three months and 20 days after the Maple Leafs signed free agent David Clarkson for seven seasons and $36.75 million, he'll suit up with them for his first meaningful game.

And what an addition he'll be to the first-place team.

At 7-3-0 the Maple Leafs lead the Atlantic and when Clarkson joins them Friday, it'll be as though they just acquired a 20-to-25-goal scorer off the free agent market today. So far they've been winning without him in the most statistically unfriendly way possible. On average, Toronto has been getting outshot by more than seven per game, but still have the league's fifth-best offence.

So will Toronto's biggest off-season acquisition lead to a further surge in goal scoring?

Probably not. Mainly because, well, Clarkson isn't a goal scorer the same way Phil Kessel and Joffrey Lupul are, or James van Riemsdyk is becoming. The idea of Clarkson as an offensive producer happened suddenly two seasons ago, when he notched 30 goals to break his career-high by a whopping 13. And he still only managed 46 points that season, which would have ranked fifth on the non-playoff Leafs team.

Clarkson notched 15 goals in 48 games for the Devils last season and his 24 points put him third on the team. So he didn't produce at the same pace as that breakout season, but the production was still coming at a better rate than it had in his first four full NHL seasons. Power forwards usually take five or six years to start hitting their potential.

Clarkson certainly upped his game and became a better producer overnight in 2011-12, on the strength of a high 13.2 shooting percentage — a number that was cut by nearly five per cent last season. While the odds are against him reaching 30 goals again, he at least can be expected to reach 20-plus consistently now.

What the Toronto native will really add to this team is his fearlessness and gritty in-front-of-the-net play. He's a player the other team has to pay attention to because he's always in your face, which will in turn create more space and opportunity for the real marquee scorers. And what if the focus is taken off Clarkson? He'll be in front of the net to pop in one of his 20 or 25 goals.

Clarkson's real value to his new team is in the corners and in front of the net — not any perceived game-breaking, goal-scoring potential.

New Leaf

Debut for Buds highly anticipated

David Clarkson is not the only one eager to see himself in the Leafs lineup come Friday night.

His teammates are, too.

"He's a great hockey player and he understands how he has to play," said centre Nazem Kadri, who played a fair bit with Clarkson and Joffrey Lupul in training camp. "He's a big gritty guy who has some good hands around the net.

"If I'm playing with him, I will be looking for him. And I will be following him on the forecheck as well. He's a big body who can get in there and separate guys from the puck. For a guy like me, that's great."

From Etobicoke, Clarkson can't wait to finally make his own dream come true and wear Maple Leaf colours.

"It will be a huge honour," said Clarkson.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
For best results today, you should be totally honest about your feelings — even when a backlash is likely. You may lose out in some way in the short-term but in the long-term your reputation will soar.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
A loved one can be hard to understand at times and today it may be impossible to work out what is going on in their head, never mind their heart! Don't worry, it will be OK.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Make sure any changes you make over the next 24 hours are necessary. If you have any doubts at all you should keep things as they are, at least for the time being.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Make a wish list and expect those wishes to start coming true over the next few days. Thoughts exist, they are real, and the more you think about what you desire, the more likely it is you will get it.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You may not be the sort who is easily fooled but you should still be on your guard today. Someone you thought you could trust is playing games at your expense. Don't let their games leave you out of pocket.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
The planets warn you may be too lenient with someone. If you are, it is likely they will take it as a sign of weakness and take from you more. Don't let your heart rule your head.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Under no circumstances should you take risks with money. The Sun's move into the financial area of your chart means there is a lot to gain but more to lose.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
If there is one thing you hate, it's not being sure what is true and what is false. But, there is no way of knowing today. The more thought you give the situation, the more of a dilemma it will be, so stop it.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Some people just cannot take criticism and one such person will give you a hard time today because you pointed out where they're going wrong. They should not abuse you — they should thank you.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You seem to be in a forgiving mood, which is not like you at all. Others may be suspicious but, yes, it's true — you really do want to be nice to people. They may even be nice back.

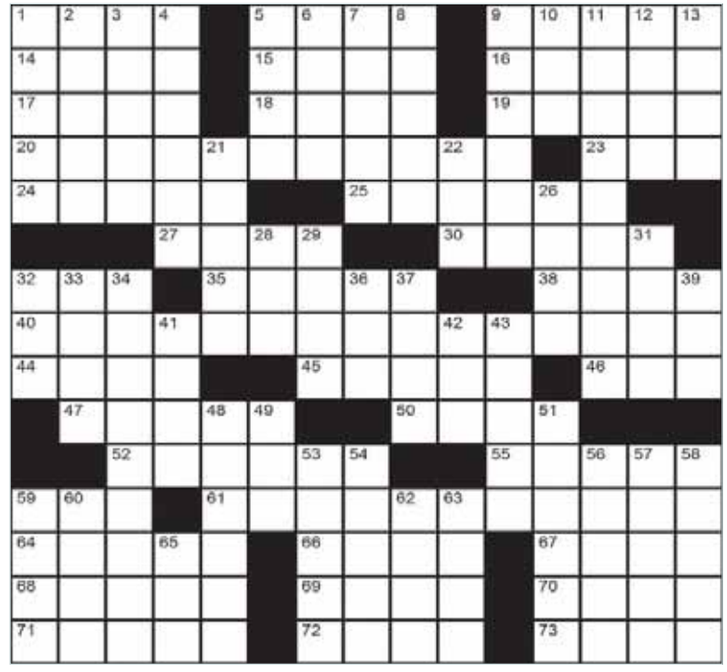
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You have never been the sort to care too much what others think and if you find yourself swimming against the tide of opinion today you will be quite happy about it. You enjoy being the odd one out?

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
If certain people seem somewhat evasive, it's a sure sign that something underhand is going on. And, you have a fair idea what it is. Don't let them know their deceit has failed yet. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

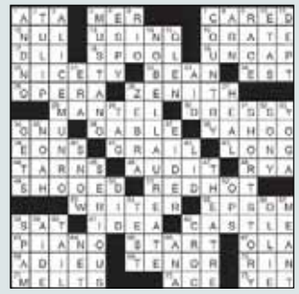
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Botanist Mr. Gray's
5. Weight unit
9. Rose __ pink (Pretty colour)
14. 110-__ appliance
15. Hawkeye State
16. Function or purpose
17. Ancient concert sites
18. Thickening gum
19. Works the Fall leaves
20. The Fall Classic: 2 wds.
23. 'Lion' suffix
24. Big tree along coastal British Columbia, __ Spruce
25. "Whatcha Say" by Jason __
27. City haze
30. Coral formations
32. Common lunchbox sandwich [acronym]
35. Dearly departed bios
38. In the distance
40. Located in Regina, the 'Depot' of the RCMP is its what?: 2 wds.
44. Wrestling of Japan
45. Vision
46. "__ Haw"
47. Prometheus, for one
50. Words on a garage sale tag
52. "The Wiz" (1978) song: "____ Down the Road"
55. Pairs
59. __-relief
61. 1983 comedy flick featuring the SCTV characters at #11-Down: 2 wds.
64. Diminish
66. Stead
67. Trickery
68. AC/DC's "__ Bells"
69. Racetrack shape
70. "Heat of the Moment" band
71. Mr. Baldwin's
72. Jodie Foster movie
73. 12 months

Down
1. Pledges
2. "Me too.": 3 wds.
3. Warning signal
4. Celery segments
5. Jobs for musicians
6. Don Juan type
7. Trophy
8. Chocolate bar, Sweet __
9. Act on
10. Conductor, __-Pekka Salonen
11. "__ __, __!" - Bob and Doug McKenzie
12. Eras
13. Fewer
21. Matt of movies
22. Be off
26. Be up ahead
28. Kimono sash
29. Some bar drinks
31. Ditto
32. Tips, tiny-ly
33. Men's cologne brand
34. Pairs skating great who is a judge on "Battle of the Blades": 2 wds.
36. Restaurant chain, _-_-_. Friday's
37. Canadian band of "Scratching the Surface"
39. Word with Whiskey
41. Bitty bit
42. Actor brother of Miley's ex Liam ...his initials-sharers
43. "There is _ __ in the affairs of men." - Shakespeare
48. Evaluate
49. Web
51. Public transport mode
53. Synthetic yarn
54. Gullible
56. Originate from
57. Alberta village, 'Gateway to the Handhills'
58. Use profanities
59. "Who Let the Dogs Out" by __ Men
60. Cain's sibling
62. Actress Patricia
63. Bird type
65. "Cake Boss" network

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Yesterday's Sudoku

7	8	6	9	3	2	1	5	4
2	4	1	7	5	6	3	9	8
9	3	5	4	8	1	7	2	6
3	1	7	2	6	4	9	8	5
5	2	8	3	7	9	4	6	1
4	6	9	5	1	8	2	3	7
1	7	3	6	9	5	8	4	2
8	5	2	1	4	3	6	7	9
6	9	4	8	2	7	5	1	3

Today's Sudoku

3		2			9		5	
				6	1			2
4				5		3		
		7					9	
		4	1		5	7		
	6					2		
		8		9				6
1			7	8				
	4		2			8		5

Today
8°/1°
Variable

Friday
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Showers
40%

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Here's what key economic leaders in Ontario are saying about Bruce Power nuclear:

"Bruce Power has been a positive contributor to Ontario's economy over the last decade and is a key strategic player in the energy sector. The innovation demonstrated at the Bruce Power site is recognized globally."

Allan O'Dette, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Chamber of Commerce

"The current investment and operation program at Bruce Power, outlined in its 2040 vision, projects a contribution of 15,000 jobs and $3 billion annually into our economy. This is critical for southwestern Ontario. Not only will Bruce Power create economic activity directly, it will play a key role by providing affordable electricity to families and businesses across the province."

Serge Lavoie, President Southwest Economic Alliance

"Over the last 12 years, we have worked closely with Bruce Power to create economic opportunities for our manufacturers in the province and the company's $7 billion investment program has and will continue to be a major boost to the province. While these projects will have significant economic impacts, they will also continue to provide Ontarians with affordable, reliable electricity, which is important to our manufacturing sector in particular."

Ian Howcroft, Vice-President, Ontario Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters

"The Bruce Power project achieves a number of key goals for the province including keeping prices low for families and businesses, and investing private dollars into public assets without impacting the province's balance sheet in the process. This is a model that has served Ontario well over the last decade and will be essential moving forward."

Mark Romoff, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships

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